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THE

CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE

REV. C. WYVILL

WITH THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM PITT.

PART I.

PUBLISHED BY MR WYVILL.

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1796.

will be published in the following
to those who have given up

any efforts to do so.

It is my earnest wish that you will
not let down your head at all
and continue to work hard.

If you are allowed to leave off
all work you should do so.

Paper I.

*The substance of MR WYVILL's conversation with MR Pitt, on the 5th of May, 1783; communicated to the Committee of Association of the County of York, at their Meeting, on the 1st of Oct. 1783.**

AFTER Mr Pitt had informed me what his motions on the 7th of May would be, I told him, I much approved the Proposition for preventing Bribery and Expence at Elections, and that for punishing Boroughs with disfranchisement on the conviction of a majority of the Electors having been guilty of corruption.—Respecting the third Proposition, for adding one hundred Members to the Counties and the Metropolis, I begged to know, whether it was his meaning that the proposed augmentation of Members should be made according to the proportion between England and Scotland, as established at the Union; and whether it was his meaning that the Members should be added in equal numbers

* At this Meeting, the Committee passed Resolutions, thanking Mr Pitt for his excellent proposition to Parliament on the 7th of May, 1783; and expressing their hopes of success from his virtuous perseverance.

to the several Counties, or in a due proportion according to their respective population and importance.—Mr Pitt assured me that it was his idea, that the proportion agreed between England and Scotland at the Union should be observed in the Distribution of the Members; but that with regard to the other measure, viz. the mode of distribution to the several Counties, he was not determined. It was in his own opinion proper to make the augmentation in a due proportion to the importance of each County; but several of his friends were inclined to make it, by simply adding one or two to each County, without any regard to population or size. He seemed to wish for my opinion; I therefore told him, I was glad to find his own Judgment led him to make the proposed addition in due proportion, and earnestly pressed him to abide by it.—The Nation felt the inconvenience arising from the want of foresight in our forefathers, from whose inattention to establish and maintain due proportion in the House of Commons, the present complaints of the People arose. That it behoved us therefore to pay greater attention to Theory than they had done; and to make the distribution with a regard to the importance of the Counties. There might be local reasons, respecting the Land-tax, why the Members of some parts of England, Bedfordshire for instance, might wish the addition should be made equally to each County, without regard to its size, &c.; but since what would gain those Members, for opposite local reasons, would disgust the Members of other parts of the kingdom, there was no advantage likely to result.

result from it, in favour of the Plan, which could render it necessary or politic to sacrifice Theory to greater Practicability. But what struck me most forcibly, as an objection to adding an equal number of Members to the small as well as the great Counties, was this, in the small Counties the interest of powerful families is found most prevalent, in the large Counties the Democracy has usually the greatest weight; therefore, adding to the large Counties a proportionably large number of Members, would strengthen the Democracy; whereas, adding as many to the small Counties as to the large, would in a much greater degree strengthen the Aristocracy, who are already too powerful in this Country, and the People too little so. In my opinion, therefore, the merit of the measure of adding more County members, depends greatly on its being done in due proportion.—This observation had the effect I desired with Mr Pitt; and he determined to declare his opinion in the House, on the 7th of May, that the augmentation should be made *in due proportion*.—I then ventured to suggest to Mr Pitt, that as there were several great unrepresented Towns, it struck me, that when any corrupt Borough, in consequence of his intended Regulation, was disfranchised, instead of sinking the number of the House of Commons, it might not be improper to transfer the Election Franchise to those Towns; especially, as otherwise the proportion between England and Scotland, which he wished to have maintained, must probably be very soon broken through to a considerable degree. But as Mr Pitt wished to obviate objections to in-

creasing the number of Members, by providing means for their gradual decrease again, what I observed on this head did not meet his ideas. I also hinted, that his plan would be better received in the Capital, if in the course of his Speech he took occasion to mention, that the addition to the Capital would chiefly go to the unrepresented Inhabitants of Marybone, Pancras, Tower Hamlets, &c. But though he seemed to concur in sentiment, he did not chuse to touch upon the case of unrepresented Persons, but to keep the subject as clear as possible in the outset of any matter that could give offence. He seemed perfectly aware of the apprehensions entertained concerning the Duke of Richmond's Plan, and resolved to avoid any thing that might bear the most distant construction of having a tendency that way.—I then told Mr Pitt how much I approved his whole Plan, as now explained, and my opinion, that it would be generally approved in Yorkshire, as being full as much as they had any reason to expect he would propose to Parliament. The Regulation respecting the Disfranchisement of corrupt Boroughs appeared to me particularly happy. And I thought, if his three propositions were carried into effect, and the Septennial Bill was repealed, the objects of the Yorkshire Association would be attained, and the County would probably determine to dissolve the Committee.

I was happy to find Mr Pitt was impressed with sentiments of great respect for the character and conduct of the Yorkshire Gentlemen.

C. WYVILL.

Paper II.

LETTER from the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE, May 23d, 1783.

Sir,

WHEN you did me the honour, on the 5th instant, to explain your views in framing the three propositions which were submitted to the consideration of Parliament on the 7th inst. I had no hesitation to declare my hearty approbation of your Plan. In my apprehension, those propositions were judiciously adapted to the present state of Public Opinion, and were calculated to procure the best and most extensive Reformation of Parliament, which could then be proposed with any probability of success, or on any sufficient ground of popular Declaration. If Parliament had consented to add one hundred Members to the Counties and the Metropolis, and to establish Regulations for the prevention of Bribery and Expence at Elections, and for the Disfranchisement of Boroughs guilty of gross and general Corruption, by those Improvements of the Constitution, and the Repeal of the Septennial Bill, the objects of the Association of the County of York would have been completely attained, and in some respects exceeded. The admission of Copyholders to the Right of Election, the abolition of fictitious Votes in Scotland, and the Correc-

tion of inferior, local, abuses of Election, might be expected to follow that Renovation of the Constitution, without any farther interposition of the People, by their Committees. And if the means thus provided for checking gross Corruption should hereafter be found inadequate to that purpose, and the decayed and venal Boroughs should still endanger the Liberty of the Nation, it is evident, that after every milder method of correction had failed to secure the freedom and independence of Parliament, the AMPUTATION of those Boroughs, by an Act of the Legislature, on due application from the People, would be a measure perfectly unexceptionable, and also practicable with much greater facility than it can be thought at present. On these grounds I ventured to declare to you my firm persuasion that, if your Propositions should be adopted by Parliament, and the Septennial Bill should be repealed, that Parliamentary Reformation would be satisfactory to the County of York, and the Committee would probably be dissolved at the next General Meeting of the County. As far as I could form a judgment of the disposition of so large a Body of Men, this appeared to me most consistent with their usual candour and moderation; and I am happy to assure you, Sir, from subsequent correspondence, I am satisfied, I did not materially misrepresent their sentiments.

But I trust the opinion slated to you, what in that case probably would be their conduct, was sufficiently understood to bear an immediate reference to the actual circumstances of the county,

at

at that time only. Parliament, by rejecting your Plan, has in effect refused any redress of that national grievance, the gross inequality of the Representation of the People, of which the County of York, and many other great and important Districts, had complained. The refusal loudly calls upon those Bodies to reiterate their application to Parliament, and to press with increasing vigour for a due correction of that alarming abuse. If, therefore, in the course of this unavoidable struggle, the Yorkshire Gentlemen shall be supported by a more general concurrence of their fellow-citizens, and terms of greater advantage to the Constitution, than those which Parliament has so recently rejected, shall appear to be attainable by regular and legal means, in justice to themselves, in justice to the Public, and to posterity, they will not stop short at inferior Improvements. But the County of York, far from wishing to push the Reformation of Parliament to an indefinite extent, has guarded against the possibility of that excess, by its Resolutions on the 19th of December, 1782. There the County has drawn a line, beyond which, in my conception, it stands pledged not to proceed; but within those limits it certainly may be expected to exert strenuous efforts to obtain the best possible security for the Rights and Liberty of the Nation.

Feeling, as they do, the utmost gratitude for your generous, though hitherto unsuccessful, endeavours to RESTORE THE CONSTITUTION, I am persuaded the Yorkshire Gentlemen will, with perfect confidence, rely on your zeal to promote

the most effectual Reformation of Parliament which, in any future situation of the Country, may be found practicable.

I have the honour to be,

With high respect, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper III.

The Substance of Mr Wyvill's Conversation with the Right Hon. W. Pitt, February 15th, 1784; communicated to the Yorkshire Gentlemen alluded to in it.

I Told Mr Pitt that I wished for an opportunity to inform him what was passing in Yorkshire, on the subject of an Address to the Throne: that a Requisition to the Sheriff, for a County Meeting to be called for that purpose, had been signed about ten days ago by a few Gentlemen in the West-Riding; that their number was now increased to fifty-four; and as it seemed agreeable to the sense of that part of the County, that there was little doubt the measure would take place. I mentioned my own general approbation of it; but that I thought there might be some danger from running precipitately into an Address

dress on the subject of Prerogative; there might be future inconvenience from it; and, therefore, in concurrence with other Gentlemen, I wished the question there to be, an Address for the Dissolution of Parliament. On this subject Mr Pitt expressed some difficulties; declared his intention, however, not to agree to any conciliation with the better part of his opponents, unless the India Bill, as calculated to establish a new Executive Power, was given up; and also such other measures as had a similar tendency; but thought it now plain, that let Government change hands as it might, those dangerous measures must be defeated. On this, I told Mr Pitt how much I had rejoiced at the part he had taken in opposing the India Bill, and that I had no doubt the public would support him in requiring that measure to be given up: that as to the difficulties attending a Dissolution of Parliament, I was aware of them; but if the supplies were stopt, if the annual Mutiny Bill was rejected, if public business was still obstructed, in that case a Dissolution of Parliament seemed to be perfectly justifiable,* as the only constitutional measure by which Government could be supported: that the Meeting of the County of York would probably not take place for three weeks, in order to give time for these matters to be ascertained. If Union on the ground specified by Mr Pitt was

* The idea here suggested was adopted by the Meeting of the County of York on the 25th of March, 1784; in whose Petition it may be found expanded, and at large insisted on, at the 327th page of the 2d volume of Political Papers.

at all attainable, it probably would be attained within that time; and the Supplies, the Mutiny Bill, &c. would be decided.

On the subject of Union, Mr Pitt agreed it must take place soon, or not at all; considering the manner in which he had been treated, it could not be supposed that Union could be particularly pleasant to him; but that for the Public Good he thought it would be right to agree to it, on the terms already mentioned: that Lord North was now out of the question, and therefore a Union with the better part of the Opposition was what he had some hope of, though he could not be very sanguine in his expectations of it.

C. WYVILL.

Paper IV.

Letter from the Rev. C. Wyvill to the Right Honourable William Pitt.

YORK TAVERN, April 3, 1784.

Dear Sir,

I Received last night the honour of your Letter from Mr Wilberforce, just after the Nomination Meeting had been closed by the Sheriff's declaration of a very considerable majority of hands in favour of Mr Duncombe and Mr Wilberforce. I was aware, from the beginning of this

this business, that great prejudices against the Association subsisted in the minds of many Gentlemen here, who are Friends to your Administration; and, on my own part, have found it extremely difficult to avoid rousing those personal resentments against myself, which my former conduct had excited, and my present had not extinguished. It was not possible to avoid a public discussion of the topic of the Association, not indeed at the County Meeting, but, however, at a very large Meeting of our Confederate Friends on the evening of the 26th of March. The discussion ended in mutual satisfaction, and, I hope, a total dismission of the jealousies which had been conceived, and which threatened a breach that must have rendered any attempt to displace Mr Foljambe totally impracticable. The next day (the 27th of March) it was resolved to call the Meeting held yesterday for the nomination of Candidates; and the whole of the business ever since has been conducted with perfect cordiality, both in our private Meetings, and also at the Great Meeting of the County yesterday. From the general attendance of the Freeholders, without solicitation on our part, and the warmth with which the joint nomination of Messrs Duncombe and Wilberforce was supported by them, I have no doubt the sense of the County is decidedly in our favour; and though violent efforts will be made against our Friends, and the most compulsive means will be used to influence every person in any degree dependent on our adversaries, yet final success in the County Election, I think, may be

be depended on. Lord John* is in great danger of being thrown out of this City; and a report has just reached this place, that the Devonshire Nomination at Knaresborough, by some strange fortuitous concurrence of circumstances, has been defeated, and Sir John Coghill and Mr Bacon Frank have been returned for that place. However, I think it probable there is some mistake in this report.—The Subscription † for supporting the Election amounts to more than 20,000l. exclusive of what may have been subscribed in London.

I am, Sir, with most sincere respect,
Your faithful and obedient servant,
C. WYVILL.

* Lord John Cavendish.

† This Subscription was intended to defray the unavoidable expence, as the Law now stands, of a contested Election for the County of York; an expence by far too great for the purse of any candidate, however opulent. The magnitude of the legal expence at contested Elections for counties or great towns aggravates the evil consequences of the defects in our Representation, by disabling the sound parts of the Constituent Body duly to exercise their important Right of Election. It is a regulation of the first necessity, that such expence at contested Elections be prevented, whether our Representation be amended, or be suffered to remain in its present grossly defective state.

N. B. Mr Pitt's Letter to the Editor, dated March 30th, 1784, to which the preceding Letter is an answer, is not produced, because the Letter and its Cover are both indorsed by Mr Pitt, "Private."—For a similar reason, Mr Pitt's answer to the preceding Letter, dated April 6, 1784, is suppressed.—For nearly the same reason, some of Sir G. Savile's Letters to the Editor were before deemed inadmissible, when he was forming the Collection of Political Papers lately published.

It seems not improper here to state, that not one of the other papers written by Mr Pitt, and contained in this publication, is indorsed by him, "Private;" as the two Letters are indorsed, which are suppressed.

Paper V.

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Right Honourable WILLIAM Pitt.

NEROT'S HOTEL, Jan. 20, 1785.

Dear Sir,

THE Newspapers abound with malevolent paragraphs on the subject of your intention to support the Reform of our Representation, *as a Minister*; * a specimen of which I inclose for your perusal, together with my reply to it, and, also, my reply to other paragraphs of the same tendency, which have appeared in a different paper.

I do assure you, that I am perfectly satisfied every thing is rightly understood between us.

* If any of the Replies to the malevolent paragraphs, here alluded to, had been preserved, they would not have been withheld from the Reader. The Circular Letter, which the Editor addressed to the Friends of Political Reformation throughout Great Britain, announcing Mr Pitt's intention to support their Cause, *as a Minister and a Man*, was written with Mr Pitt's consent, at the Editor's request, with a view to animate them, and obtain the general support of the People, in County Meetings, &c.: And from Mr Pitt's compliance with this request, as well as from other parts of his conduct, the sincerity of his attachment to the cause of Reformation, *at this time*, seems to be unquestionable. It is due to Mr Pitt to add, that when this Circular Letter became, soon after the date of it, the subject of animadversion in Parliament, and was there treated by some as an unauthorized Letter, and considered by others as a Letter authentic indeed, but conceived in very exceptionable Terms, Mr Pitt did Mr Wyvill ample justice, declaring, that the Letter was written with his consent; and though not dictated by him, truly and well expressed what he meant to have said.

You

You have placed in me a * Trust of the greatest consequence ; and I am conscious of having acted in it with fidelity, to the best of my Judgment. On the other hand, I have acted thus, without a single scrap of paper, or written authority of any kind. This is, I confess, a slender return for your confidence in me ; but it was the best return in my power.—I have only to add upon this subject, that I wish to have no written answer to this Note ; I never wanted it before, nor do I now desire it. If I had it in my power to express a more full reliance, I would.

The other inclosed Papers are copies of my earliest Letters, on the subject of our conversation, to Mr Mason, Mr Tooker, and Mr Wilkinson ; † that to Lord Effingham I have not yet obtained.

Believe me ever, dear Sir,
With the highest regard,
Most faithfully yours,
C. WYVILL.

* The Trust here alluded to, was the authority verbally given to Mr Wyvill by Mr Pitt, to communicate to the Friends of Reformation, as widely as possible, his intention to promote their Cause to the utmost extent of his power ; and to invite their assistance by Petitions at General Meetings, &c. Copies of the most material Letters which had been written by the Editor, on this subject, were at this time seen and approved by Mr Pitt.

The Paper, intitled, “ Heads of a Bill or Bills for amending the Representation,” was intrusted with Mr Wyvill, probably, soon after this time ; but of the day when it was delivered to him, he has found no mention.

† For a Copy of the Letter to Mr Wilkinson, here alluded to, and for Copies of some other Letters on the same subject, see the Appendix.

Paper VI.

*Letter from the Right Honourable WILLIAM
PITT to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

*Monday (supposed to be Monday the 24th
of January, 1785.)*

My dear Sir,

IN reconsidering the subject on which I had the pleasure of conversing with you, I see no reason to vary the opinion in which we then agreed as to the propriety of a Meeting.*

Believe me, dear Sir,

Faithfully and sincerely your's,
W. Pitt.

* The Meeting alluded to in this Letter was that Meeting of the County of York which was held on Thursday the 10th of February, 1785. in order to give their utmost support to Mr Pitt's intended Motion in Parliament, for effecting a Reform in the Representation. The Circular Letter mentioned in the first note annexed to Paper V. had inclined the major part of the Yorkshire Committee to assemble the County for this purpose: some, however, of the most respectable Members of the Committee, whose attachment to the cause of Reformation was undoubted, were averse from the measure, fearing that the appearance of diminished zeal might injure the cause, if the proposed Meeting should be less numerously attended than similar Meetings had been attended before. From this Letter it may be collected, that after due deliberation, Mr Pitt gave the sanction of his decided approbation to the measure of a County Meeting. The Circular Letter had been agreed to, with a view to obtain, if possible, a Declaration from the Collective Body of the People in favour of the intended Reform. Under the circumstances which have been stated, Mr Pitt's perseverance to act in pursuance of the plan laid down, affords another proof of his sincere attachment, *at this time*, to the cause of Reformation.

Paper VII.

Paper VII.

LETTER from the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.

NEROT'S HOTEL, Feb. 2, 1785.

Dear Sir,

I Beg leave for a moment, to interrupt you, just to say, that on Saturday next, at an early hour, I shall set out for York; and to remind you, that some points of real importance, respecting the Yorkshire Meeting, are yet unarranged. I have no doubt of our superiority there; but I believe you agree with me in thinking, it is very much the interest of the Common Cause to render that superiority as great and decisive as possible.

I am, dear Sir,
With the highest respect and regard,
Your faithful humble servant,
C. WYVILL.

Paper VIII.

Paper VIII.

*Letter from the Right Honourable WILLIAM
PITT to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

DOWNING-STREET, Feb. 16th, 1785.

My dear Sir,

I Have but one moment, of which, however, I cannot omit making use, to return you many thanks for your * Two Letters, and to congratulate you on the success which has so amply justified your expectation. I trust this happy example will have a powerful and general effect.

I am, with great truth and regard,

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful and obedient

W. Pitt.

* Copies of the two Letters here alluded to have not been preserved. They probably contained a particular account of proceedings at a previous Meeting on the 9th of February, and at the General Meeting of the County of York on the 10th of February, 1785. On this occasion, the expectations of general support throughout the kingdom, formed by the Minister and his Friends, were unfortunately disappointed; the laudable example of the County of York was not followed with vigour by the rest of the nation; few Petitions were presented to Parliament; the zeal, transcendent abilities, and influence of Mr Pitt, were unable, without a strong concurrence of the people, to check the habitual tendency of the system; ill supported by them, his mild and prudent proposal of Reformation necessarily fell to the ground.

Paper IX.

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.

NEROT'S HOTEL, Feb. 28th, 1785.

Dear Sir,

WHEN I lately mentioned the money accumulated in the hands of the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, as a sum that on certain conditions might be justly applied to the service of the State, you seemed to think the subject deserved farther consideration. The inclosed Proposal* is the result of what has occurred to me; and, without pretending to any financial skill, I shall much rejoice, if you find it capable of being turned to any serviceable purpose.

I am ever, with the greatest regard,

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

* The Memorial at page 19 contains this Proposal.

Paper X.

Paper X.

MEMORIAL respecting certain Sums of Money vested in the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty; and the conditions on which the said Sums seem justly applicable to the Public Service.

IT is understood, that the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty are possessed of one considerable sum of money vested in their names, or in trust to them, though appropriated to augment certain small benefices in England and Wales. For this sum, interest not exceeding 2 per cent. is annually paid to the several incumbents of those benefices, according to their respective appropriated shares. It is also understood, that another large sum is vested in the said Governors, which is wholly unappropriated. The total accumulation of these monies, appropriated and unappropriated, may be taken to amount to 500,000l.

The excuse which is alledged for this accumulation is, the extreme difficulty of finding purchasable Lands of the exact value wanted, and perfectly unexceptionable in title, and every other respect. As 2 per cent. has been the annual allowance of interest for such sums as have been allotted to certain poor benefices, until estates could be purchased, and annexed to each benefice; and as few such purchases have been made even during the last ten years, in which the price of land has been uncommonly low,

and consequently the incumbents of such poor benefices were interested in a more than usual degree to find proper estates to be purchased with their respective allotments, the excuse alledged seems to be a fair and sufficient exculpation of the persons concerned in this trust.

But the validity of their plea proves, that, under the present regulations, accumulation will be continued, and the relief of the poorer Clergy, the immediate purpose of this benevolent Donation, will be much retarded, or rather, in many instances, will be entirely defeated. It appears, therefore, to be not only just and equitable, but necessary for the due accomplishments of augmentation intended by Queen Anne, that Parliament should interpose, to direct an application of the said fund in some more speedy and effectual mode, to that charitable purpose.

This being admitted to be proper, it is proposed, that Government shall apply to Parliament for an Act, ordaining that the above-mentioned accumulation of money, supposed to amount to 500,000l. shall be paid into the Exchequer at Midsummer next, on the conditions following; to wit:

1. That from the date of such transfer to the State, the Public Faith shall be engaged to pay the interest to become due for all appropriated sums as aforesaid, part of the said 500,000l. at the rate of 2 per cent. per ann. till Michaelmas next, and from Michaelmas, for ever, at the rate of 5 per cent. per ann.

2. That returns of all the benefices in England and Wales, under 50l. per ann. shall be exhibited

exhibited to Parliament within twenty days after the commencement of the next Session, in order that interest at the rate of 5 per cent. per ann. for the unappropriated sum, being the residue of the said 500,000 l. may be distributed in such manner as Parliament shall appoint for the augmentation of the said benefices.

3. That the payment of First-fruits and Tenthths shall be continued for the farther augmentation of the said benefices, *in this mode, annually*, until the income of every benefice shall have been augmented to 50 l. per ann. and no more. And when no benefice under 50 l. a year shall be left in England and Wales, the payment of First-fruits and Tenthths shall be then discontinued, and wholly extinguished.

4. Lastly, that a clause shall be added to every future Land-tax Act, directing the Receivers-General of the Land-tax in England and Wales, out of the monies collected by virtue of such Act, by half-yearly payments, and without fee or deduction whatsoever, to pay the sums thus appropriated by Parliament to the incumbents of the several augmented benefices within their respective districts; or otherwise, to cause the said sums to be paid by such Collectors of the Land-tax within their respective districts, as may reside nearest to the place of residence of the said incumbents.*

C. WYVILL.

LONDON, Feb. 26th, 1785.

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Paper XI.

* If the appropriation of the sum of money mentioned in this Memorial had taken place on the terms proposed, the State would

Paper XI.

*Note from the Right Honourable WILLIAM Pitt
to the Rev. C. Wyvill.*

MR Pitt presents his compliments to Mr Wyvill, and if he is disengaged at nine on Friday morning, would be much obliged to him if he would take his Breakfast in Downing-street, as Mr Pitt wishes much for the honour of seeing him* previous to Monday.

DOWNING-STREET, Wednesday, April 13th.

would have been accommodated with the loan of it on easy interest, and a great number of the inferior Clergymen of the Church of England, who are at once the most necessitous and the most laborious Members of that Body, would have received a comfortable addition to their slender incomes. If the sum in question be vested entirely in the 3 per cent. Fund, it would have afforded an immediate increase of 15l. a year to at least one thousand of the most indigent of our parochial Priests: It would have afforded more if vested in the other Funds; and the sums raised in future by the operation of Queen Anne's Bounty, instead of being suffered again to accumulate into a large and useless mass, would have been applied as speedily as they possibly could be, to the relief of the remaining poor parish Priests of the Church of England, till at last, after the object of the Queen's Bounty had been fully attained, the taxes of First-fruits and Tents, often found by the beneficed Clergy to be very inconvenient and burthensome, would have been discontinued.—If the principles of this proposal should be approved, the time may come, it even seems to be at no very great distance, when the application of them may afford a supply neither inconsiderable nor unseasonable to the exigencies of the State.

* The object of this interview was farther consultation on the intended Motion for a Reform in the Representation, previous to the day fixed for making it, viz. Monday, April 18th, 1785.

Paper XII.

Paper XII.

*Letter from the Right Honourable WILLIAM
PITT to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

DOWNING-STREET, May 7th, 1785.

Dear Sir,

I flatter myself the Queen Anne's Bounty may be made useful to the Public Service, but I think it need not come as part of the Budget; which makes it unnecessary for me to trouble you immediately.

I shall be extremely happy to see you when the business of the present moment is a little over.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most faithful

and obedient servant,

W. Pitt.

Paper XIII.

*Letter from the Right Honourable WILLIAM
PITT to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

PUTNEY-HEATH, May 29th, 1785.

Dear Sir,

BUSINESS which I must dispatch before to-morrow, has obliged me, contrary to my

intention, to stay here to-day. I cannot easily be in town sooner than half past twelve to-morrow, and should be very glad to have the pleasure of seeing you then in Downing-street, if it is not inconvenient to you. But if the time of your setting out makes an early hour of consequence, I will endeavour to meet you as much sooner as you please.*

I am, dear Sir,

Very sincerely your's,

W. PIT.

* At this time Mr Wyvill was on the point of passing over to the Continent, on an excursion through Paris to the Glacieres of Savoy and Switzerland. Having been kindly furnished by Viscount Mahon with a Letter of Introduction to Dr Franklin, Mr Wyvill wished to inform Mr Pitt of this circumstance, and to offer his service, if he could be of any, during his intended short residence at Paris. On his arrival in that capital, Mr Wyvill hastened to pay his respects to the venerable Ambassador of America; by whom he was received with every mark of cordial civility and good-will. In repeated conversations with Mr Wyvill, Dr Franklin expressed his own amicable disposition to Great-Britain; and his earnest wish that the recent reconciliation between this country and America might be improved into the closest friendship and union, by the prudence, moderation, and good faith of their respective Governments.

Paper XIV.

Letter from the Rev. C. Wyvill to the Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.

BURTON-HALL, December 11th, 1785.

Dear Sir,

MY Father has informed me that a Petition has lately been transmitted by him to the Board of Treasury, requesting that a Pension, which he has enjoyed several years, may by their authority be continued; without which allowance, the Board of Excise in Scotland have intimated their intention to discontinue it, as inconsistent with the spirit of the present Administration.

On this occasion I should disapprove my own conduct, if I remained silent; because I think it extremely probable, from the regard with which you have honoured me so much, that you may feel some difficulty, some degree of reluctance, to enforce, in the present instance, those frugal maxims of Government, which you have laid down with the same strictness as you would carry them into execution in ordinary cases. Permit me, therefore, to assure you, that it is my earnest and only wish, that you will put me and my connection with the Petitioner entirely out of your consideration, and treat him exactly as you would treat every other person in the same predicament. If the circumstances of his case do not justify the pension as an indulgence merited

ted by service, unobjectionable in point of precedent, and fit to be allowed in all similar situations, it ought to be struck off; and I shall applaud the hand which does rescind it, with as much sincerity, and with as much alacrity too, as if the person afflicted by the stroke were altogether unknown to me. I say this not from indifference to so near a relation, because I mean to compensate his loss, as I had before promised I would, when, from the part I took in promoting a Petition to Parliament against unmerited Pensions, &c. it was not improbable *his* might be disallowed by the Minister then, for reasons very different from those which I am certain will determine your resolution now. In pressing you to put me quite out of the question, and to act according to your impartial judgment alone, I do what I conceive to be my duty; and I should ill deserve your regard and good opinion, which I value so highly, if I could entertain a wish for a single moment, that, on my account, you would depart from those general rules of œconomy, which are, in the present exhausted state of our country, indispensably necessary.

I am, dear Sir,

With the greatest respect and regard,
Most faithfully your's,
C. WYVILL.

Paper XV.

*Letter from the Right Honourable WILLIAM
PITT to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

HOLWOOD-HILL, Jan. 8th, 1786.

Dear Sir,

I Meant to have acknowledged immediately the favor of your Letter, and am extremely concerned that in the variety of business it has from time to time escaped me. The sentiments you express are such as, from knowing your character and principle, I cannot be surprized at. It would, I confess, have given me great pain, if a person so nearly connected with you had been a sufferer by any system laid down by the present Government, however unavoidable. I have, therefore, peculiar pleasure in being able to assure you, that, before I received your Letter, or knew that Mr Wyvill had any connection with you, the simple circumstance of the case had determined me to send directions to the Commissioners of the Excise in Scotland to continue his Pension, as being clearly not within the line of a just and rational reduction.—I hope your health has benefited by your summer exertions.* Believe me to be at all times,

My dear Sir,

With the greatest regard,
Most faithfully your's,

W. PITT.

* N. B. This is the last Letter received by Mr Wyvill from Mr Pitt.

Paper XVI.

Paper XVI.

Letter from the Rev. C. Wyvill to the Right Honourable WILLIAM Pitt.

BURTON-HALL, Jan. 11th, 1787.

Dear Sir,

MR Wilberforce having lately expressed his intention to resume, in the next Session of Parliament, the subject of a County Register, with some modification of Lord Stanhope's Plan;* and having yet formed no decided opinion what that modification ought to be, I have thrown together some thoughts upon it, which are communicated to him by this post; and I also venture to trouble you with a copy, though not without much hesitation, considering the near

* The principle of the modified Plan here alluded to, is, to employ the Constable to form, annually, a List of the Freeholders within his township who are qualified to vote at Elections for the County, as he is at present employed to form a List of Freeholders qualified to serve as Jurors. Were the County Electors thus ascertained, a great reduction of expence at Elections for the Counties might be effected; the poll might be taken at the chief place of every Hundred, or in every Parish, which would be still better.—Whether this idea was or was not approved by Mr Pitt, is not certainly known to the Editor, by whom *no answer was received* to this Letter. Mr Wilberforce approved and adopted the plan suggested, and placed it in the hands of the Editor's Friend, John Baynes, Esq. a young Lawyer of the greatest expectation, to be drawn by him in a technical form; but before he had drawn the Bill, Mr Baynes died. After his lamented death, the plan was said to be communicated to A. Luders, Esq. for the same purpose; but before he was able to finish this task, the death of Mr Phillips, the intended mover of the Bill, and the growing indisposition of the House of Commons to every question of Reform, disconcerted and finally defeated the design.

approach

approach of your busiest season. I am aware how imperfect a sketch I now submit to your perusal; but if the proposed alteration in the paper inclosed should fortunately meet your opinion, and Mr Wilberforce and Lord Stanhope should be content to admit the modification, I think, when properly corrected, it might probably pass both the Houses of Parliament with less opposition than his Lordship's Plan experienced last year, as it is somewhat less complicated, and somewhat less remote from the common practice.—The only material objection which has occurred to myself, or those I have been able to consult, is, that the Constable might abuse his power. In times of tranquillity, I am persuaded, this would rarely happen; never, perhaps, to any dangerous extent. In times of much political agitation, if some should be interested to tempt the Constable to transgress, others would be found equally interested to watch, and to detect the fraud.—No Schedule accompanies the Plan, though often referred to in it. In most of those references, the regulations in Lord Stanhope's Schedule are what I had in view: But if the general idea should have your approbation, the Schedule, I suppose, would be easily completed.

It is with great pleasure I take this opportunity to assure you, that your relaxation* of the Horse-

* By this relaxation, farmers renting less than 70 pounds a year were exempted from paying the Horse-tax. This exemption was proposed to Mr Pitt at an official interview by the Editor, with the concurrence of Mr Duncombe and Mr Wilberforce.—The Secretaries objected the precarious state of the Revenue, which

Horse-tax last year has been received in this country with that universal satisfaction and gratitude, which an indulgence in itself so great, and granted at a time so critical to your reputation as a Minister, so well deserved.

I am, with the highest regard,

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful

and obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XVII.

Letter from the Rev. C. Wyvill to the Right Honourable WILLIAM Pitt.

BURTON-HALL, July 29th, 1787.

Dear Sir,

* **W**HEN your Propositions for reforming our Representation were offered to the House of Commons, the distressful consequences of

which at that time could ill bear so considerable a defalcation. But the propriety of relieving the poorest class of cultivators from a burthen that ought only to fall on the rich proprietors of horses used for luxury, prevailed with Mr Pitt, and the desired indulgence was granted.—Mr Wyvill states this circumstance with pleasure; it does credit to the financial principles and courage of Mr Pitt.

* Two winters had passed after the last motion made by Mr Pitt for amending our Representation, and yet his expected Bill was not produced. Whether this delay ought to be imputed

of the War with America were yet felt severely by the nation; and the corruption of Parliament, under a former Minister, was yet considered, with general detestation, as the principal cause of those misfortunes. But the adoption of your whole system seems to be reserved for some period of still greater distress, when the abuses of corruption shall have been more ruinously practised, and shall have rendered the change more evidently and more indispensably necessary. For, even at that time, the majority of the people, as well as of the House of Commons, appears to have been adverse to your proposal; not, probably, from any fixed disapprobation

puted to caution or inadvertence, to a press of official busines, or a nascent change in the Minister's system about this time, it is not easy to determine. But it is certain the delay much exceeded the time within which the appearance of the Bill was looked for by the Friends of Reformation. The sincerity of their Leader, however, was not then suspected by the Editor; though he thought it his duty to remind Mr Pitt, that the publication of his Bill was expected. Some peculiar circumstances relative to a borough, dependent on the Board of Ordnance, seemed to present a favourable opportunity for its publication at that time. But to the Editor's Letter stating these considerations to Mr Pitt, with the accustomed freedom of their former intercourse, yet with all becoming deference and friendly zeal for the honour of his character, *no answer was returned.*

Some surprize, and some slight jealousies, were the natural consequence of this silence; but they soon yielded to the strong prepossession in Mr Pitt's favour. Within a few years after this period, however, the original principles of his Administration seemed to have been abandoned, and a system less pure, less œconomical, less friendly to popular rights, began to be gradually unfolded. But confidence once given, frankly and sincerely, is slowly and reluctantly withdrawn; and it was not till many years after the date of this Letter that the Editor was at last convinced, by the tenor of Mr Pitt's conduct, that he was become unfaithful to the cause in which he had engaged himself.

of the Plan itself, but because the Peace had already lessened in some degree the pressure of calamity, and the prospect of happier times had produced a disposition to acquiesce. Since the rejection of that motion, the prosperity of the country has been advanced with a rapidity beyond all expectation; Trade has increased, Stocks have risen, the Finances have been reduced into good order, and Government has been steadily conducted on the principles of virtuous œconomy. In its eagerness to enjoy these blessings, the nation forgets their precarious tenure; and as the benefits of your Administration are more extensively experienced, it seems more generally disinclined to any great Parliamentary change, though recommended even by your authority.

In this state of affairs, and in this temper of the nation, I trust there is not a Zealot so rash and intemperate in his pursuit of Political Reformation, as to wish you to agitate that subject again in Parliament. Be that, however, as it may, I certainly have not the smallest intention to trouble you with any such unseasonable suggestions. I only beg leave to recall to your remembrance a measure which I ventured to propose just after the loss of your great question. You then expressed your approbation of the idea, that an authentic publication of your intended Bill was due to the public, and to your own character. At that juncture, it was neither necessary, nor indeed prudent, to carry this measure into immediate execution. All the information on the subject which could at that time

time be given with propriety, was communicated to the public in the Summary Explanation of its principles, which I had the honour to publish with your permission.* But, as your other important plans for the good of your country had not yet received their discussion and decision, the publication of the Bill in question was

* This passage alludes to a fact which at the date of this Letter was recent, and all the material circumstances of which were undoubtedly fresh in the recollection of Mr Pitt. Hence the brevity of the expression, which renders the meaning somewhat obscure. The fact alluded to was this; the Summary Explanation was written with Mr Pitt's previous assent, in order to be laid before the Meeting at the Thatched House on the 24th of May, 1785, as the ground on which they might proceed to the consideration of the merits of his plan: And Mr Pitt's assent had been given expressly on condition that the piece should contain no allusion to the Heads of his Bill. The Summary Explanation was written in conformity with this condition; it was seen by Mr Pitt, and he gave Mr Wyvill his permission to publish it, to lay it before the Meeting, and to declare that Mr Pitt acknowledged the Explanation to be an accurate account of the principles of that system of Reform which he had recommended to Parliament on the 18th of April, 1785. Concerning the Paper intitled Heads of a Bill, or Bills for amending the Representation, it may be proper here to observe, that,

1. The Heads, &c. were delivered to Mr Wyvill by Mr Pitt, some time before the 18th of April, 1785, without any condition or reserve at the time expressed or understood.
2. That in May 1785, Mr Pitt, for reasons of a temporary nature, required, and Mr Wyvill promised, that there should be no allusion to the Heads, &c. in the Summary Explanation.
3. That the promise was *literally* fulfilled, by the omission of any allusion to the Heads in the Summary Explanation; and *in spirit*, by the Editor's silence upon the subject till the year 1793, when the circumstances which rendered that reserve necessary had long ceased to exist.
4. That no promise of secrecy, or reserve of any kind, was required by Mr Pitt, or agreed to by Mr Wyvill, respecting any other Papers which passed between them, except only the two Letters indorsed *Private*, which are not intended for publication.

very properly postponed, till you had leisure to reconsider the state of our Representation, and to correct your draught with that care and accuracy which the extreme importance of the subject demands. Whether the moment of leisure be now arrived, or be still at some distance, is more than I pretend to judge; yet, if the commotions in Holland, which have threatened to embroil us with that Province and with France, should be fortunately composed by your prudence and firmness, it is possible that the present recess may afford the opportunity which is wanted to prepare such a Bill for publication.

In my thoughts, there are various personal and public motives for the execution of this measure during your continuance in power; and to narrow the idea still more, during the existence of the present Parliament; and even, if possible, during its present recess.

It is not improbable, that, in the course of your life, the revolution of human affairs may bring round some favourable season for the radical correction of abuses in our Parliamentary Representation. At that critical conjuncture, great will be the advantage resulting from a previous publication of your Bill; when the then existing state of the country could not have been foreseen, and when no private interest could be assigned as the motive for your having resumed the subject. The value of this advantage, perhaps, is not much over-rated, by supposing that the possibility of *your* success would depend more upon it, than on any other circumstance which can be reasonably imagined.

But

But if the season for accomplishing a Reformation of Parliament should be more remote than I have here supposed, yet, whenever it shall arrive, the worthy Patriots of that day will undoubtedly feel and acknowledge the immense advantage of having had your system laid before them. To your previous labours, posterity will be chiefly indebted for that additional security to Public Liberty which may be then acquired. For let us suppose Lord Chatham to have formed, and submitted to Parliament and to the public, the plan which you afterwards proposed: The consequence would probably have been, that the dissensions among the various advocates of Reformation, to which their late defeat may be truly imputed, either would not have broken out, or would have been soon composed by his superior authority. But if union had been thus effected, your task would have been far less arduous than it actually was; and your efforts, in all human probability, would have been crowned with success. From the publication of this Bill by you, similar advantages may be expected hereafter; and, I trust, posterity will bow to your authority with equal respect.*

C 2

But

* At present this may appear a hyperbolical compliment; but when written, it was the honest expression of the Editor's real sentiments. In the early part of his Administration, much had been wisely and bravely done by Mr Pitt to repair our shattered finances, and to restore economy and integrity in the expenditure of the public money; and it was then expected by many of his Friends, that to complete our internal security, by an effectual Reformation of Parliament, would be the grand object of his political life. He began it as his Father had begun his, a Foe to Corruption, a Friend to the Rights of the People:

Had

But these benefits, to be reaped in a more or less distant futurity, are not the only arguments which recommend the production of your Bill. I think I see several good consequences that would immediately flow from that measure. If the Bill, with the Schedule annexed, should appear next winter, or before the next general election, that advantage might probably be derived from it which I took the liberty to state to you, soon after the attempt made by Mr Marsham to disfranchise Queenborough. The idea seemed to meet your entire approbation; but the attack upon that borough not having been renewed, no opportunity has yet occurred to make the proposed experiment. What I mean to suggest is this; the magnitude of your plan was, perhaps, in the minds of the major part of your opponents, their principal objection; and yet the very same persons who rejected the whole system, may be induced to promote its establishment in detail. For after the next general election, should any borough, convicted of corruption, appear to deserve disfranchisement, it is highly probable that by your influence the guilty borough might be punished; not, as in the cases of Shoreham and Cricklade, by imparting the right of voting there to the Freeholders of the Hundred; which is a clumsy regulation, and inapplicable to any great sys-

Had he, like him, persevered to the end, in his first attachment to the one, and his hereditary hatred to the other, he would have equalled his father in true glory; he would have surpassed him, had he with the same steadfastness adhered to his original system of pacific policy, and like Washington preserved his country from the calamities of a war with France.

tematical

tematical improvement; but by imparting the justly-forfeited franchise to those great towns and districts which are wholly unrepresented, or represented with the greatest inadequacy. If this rule of transferring the forfeited franchise should then be adopted at your recommendation, it would follow of course, that the order of transfers, previously published in your Schedule, would also be adopted. And after this rule of transfer had taken place in a few instances, the unsatisfied districts contained in the Schedule would acquire a species of right, or equitable claim, that the order of the Schedule should continue to be observed in all future transfers of the right of Representation.—And this would secure the gradual execution of a principal part of your plan, and would also tend directly to promote the accomplishment of the rest.

In a personal view, I am persuaded that this publication will be advantageous to your character. It will be considered as a fair and candid proceeding; it will prove that your propositions had been weighed very maturely; it will exhibit a system of Representation the best adapted to the state of the country and its future fluctuations of property of all which hitherto have been proposed; and, finally, it will leave those opponents, who from the mean motives of interest or resentment, do injustice to the rectitude of your conduct, no ground whatever, in the whole course of this business, for any plausible imputation.

It may be objected to the proposed publication of your Bill, that it might, perhaps, afford

occasion for invidious and malignant reflections. I suppose the objection possible, without perceiving its force; but, on the contrary, should the measure be wholly laid aside, or only delayed till your retreat from office, or till the return of great national distress, I conceive in each of these cases your conduct might be open to censure. I am aware that this publication is not exactly the measure which some of your friends would either recommend or approve; yet, if it be well calculated to support your character with the public, as I think it is, it would hardly lessen your weight even with those associates whose sentiments on the subject may be different from your own.*

But

* From the date of this Letter to the month of February 1793, the Editor's correspondence with Mr Pitt was interrupted; but the connection was yet unbroken. During the earlier part of this period, the general tenor of his administration continued to meet the Editor's approbation and applause. In the secure and unsuspecting temper of the nation, then lulled by Peace, no radical cure for a disordered Constitution could be applied with success, or attempted with prudence. The grossest abuses and defects still remained in the system of Representation, and their tendency was still as pernicious as ever; but that tendency was checked by the necessities of the State, and the influence of popular opinion. The Editor, with the rest of his countrymen, enjoyed the rising prosperity of England; and was content with them to acquiesce under great existing evils, thus mitigated by the economical spirit of the times, and the prudence of Administration. He trusted that the rights still left to the people were safe under the protection of a Patriot Minister, and that no favourable opportunity would be lost by Mr Pitt, to fortify and secure the genuine principles of the Constitution.

These flattering hopes were the best consolation of a few years; but in the latter part of the period alluded to, the prospect began to change, and a train of measures, dark and threatening in their appearance, shot across the political horizon, and threw a gloom over the country, which has become deeper and darker with

But it is time for me to stop ; I am conscious my zeal has led me to the edge of impropriety ; yet I cannot resolve to cancel what I have written, because I am also conscious my motives for using this freedom are equally right to you and to the public ; and therefore, in that view, they are sure to meet your candid acceptance.

I have only to add, that if you should resolve to publish your Bill, and should wish previously to see me, I will most cheerfully obey your commands, and come up to London at any time which may best suit your convenience.

I am, dear Sir,

With very great respect and regard,

Your's, most faithfully,

C. WYVILL.

with every succeeding year. The Editor's suspicions were now renewed with increasing force ; he grew more and more alarmed ; he plainly saw greater and greater reason for it. At last, in the beginning of February 1793, the violent steps which had been taken, apparently with a design to disgrace and ruin the whole body of Reformers, and engage this country in a rash and unnecessary war with France, induced the Editor to address an expostulatory Letter to Mr Pitt on these subjects.

The Letter was privately sent to him in February 1793 ; like the two preceding Letters, it remained unanswered, and in the course of a few weeks it was published. Had Mr Pitt deigned to return a satisfactory answer respecting the matters discussed in it, the Editor's intention was not to publish it. But his silence, combined with the facts alluded to, appeared, in his judgment, to form a strong presumptive proof that Mr Pitt had abandoned the liberal and pacific principles of policy which had rendered the early part of his administration happy and popular, and had adopted a new and dangerous system of FOREIGN WAR and INTERNAL COERCION. Under this persuasion, Mr Wyvill thought it an indispensable duty to renounce his connection with Mr Pitt, and to lay this expostulatory Letter before the public.—It seems unnecessary to republish it here.

Paper XVIII.

*Extract * of a Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL
to W. WILBERFORCE, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, March 7th, 1793.

My dear Sir,

IN my intercourse with Mr Pitt, many things were imparted to me confidentially, and in no circumstances whatever shall I think myself authorized to divulge any part of these communications, without his previous consent. But whatever at any time has been communicated to me respecting the public business of the Association, by Mr Pitt, by Lord Lansdown, or by Lord Rockingham, I have not thought such communications from men in their ministerial stations, whether made in writing or in conversation, were private communications to me individually (when secrecy was not at that time enjoined), but as communications of a public nature, made to me in my official capacity, as Chairman of the Yorkshire Committee. Of such communications, in all cases, whether made in writing or in conversation, I held myself bound to give an

* This Extract is placed in the series of papers which passed between Mr Pitt and Mr Wyvill, because, though it is taken from a Letter addressed to Mr Wilberforce, that Letter was intended to be shown to Mr Pitt, contained an offer to him, and was actually put into his hands by Mr Wilberforce. This appears from Mr Wilberforce's Letter to Mr Wyvill, dated the 30th of July, 1793; and from the same Letter it also appears, that Mr Pitt returned it to Mr Wilberforce, "with no answer."

account

account to the Committee: Papers thus communicated I considered as public papers, and myself bound in respect of them to act as the Trustee of the Committee and of the Public. This is the light in which I considered Lord Lansdown's Letters* to me about ten years ago: He understood that I kept them back from the public view at that moment, when their appearance might have been personally detrimental to him, and injurious to the Public Cause; but that I did not engage that they should be absolutely and entirely suppressed. With my having kept them back at that time, his Lordship has frequently expressed his satisfaction; at my not engaging to suppress them, I have never heard that he, or any friend of his, has expressed any displeasure or disapprobation. In the case of Lord Lansdown, I did not consent that a wanton or malevolent use should be made of his communications; in the case of Mr Pitt, which is nearly

* With respect to the publication of Lord Lansdown's Letters to the Editor in 1782, he states with pleasure that his Lordship acknowledged the propriety of Mr Wyvill's conduct; expressed his approbation of publicity in matters of national importance negotiated between a Minister of State and a Public Body of men, or their confidential Agent; and considered such Agent as responsible for his conduct to his Constituents and to the Public. This was the magnanimity of a frank and honourable mind, that scorned all unnecessary concealment. Conscious of having acted in a most important station, with integrity to the Public, and fidelity to a respectable Body of men, with whom he had entered into engagements, Lord Lansdown was too candid and equitable to withhold his approbation, or withdraw his esteem from others, who, in a humble station, and with scanty means, have acted on the same general views; dealing with equal impartiality the same measure to Ministers dead or living, to Statesmen *in* or *out* of power, and in dangerous times endeavouring, like him, with honest zeal to support the principles of our sinking Constitution.

similar,

similar, I shall act by similar rules; I shall lay myself under the same restriction, not wantonly or malevolently to publish "*the Heads of his Bill,*" or any of *his Letters*; still, however, reserving to myself the right which I think I have to retain them in behalf of the public, and in certain cases to publish them; particularly in the case alluded to in my Letter to Mr Pitt, and more distinctly stated in my last Letter to yourself, viz. on the event of Mr Pitt's death, without having effected a Reform in the Representation, and without having published the same or a better Plan of Reformation. By acting in this manner, I conceive I shall do my duty to the public, and yet nothing injurious or justly displeasing to Mr Pitt. If he wishes the papers in question to be suppressed or returned to him, I wish to gratify him, provided it can be made sufficiently evident that his claim to the disposal of these papers is a just claim. I profess, however, that it seems to me highly improbable, or rather impossible, that he can show any just claim to the disposal of *the Letters*; it appears upon the face of them that they are public Letters, and they contain nothing, as I think, which upon examination will be found to alter their quality. But the paper intitled "*Heads of a Bill, &c.*" is somewhat differently circumstanced; and though I do at present conceive it to be properly a communication of a public nature, like *the Letters*; yet if there is any circumstance relating to this paper which shows that it ought not to be so considered, I shall not hesitate to return it to Mr Pitt, when convinced of my mistake;

mistake; and I will publicly acknowledge my error, if into an error I have fallen from inadvertence or forgetfulness of any material circumstance respecting this paper, and state the reasons also which may have produced that conviction; and that conviction will be produced, if Mr Pitt will assert to me, that, when the paper intitled "*Heads of a Bill, &c.*" was communicated to me, he distinctly recollects, either that he laid me under an injunction of perpetual secrecy respecting it, or expressed to me that it was a paper which he reserved the power to recall when he saw fit, or somewhat equivalent, clearly explained at the time. Under these circumstances, I shall think myself authorised to deliver the paper in question back to Mr Pitt, though I do not myself recollect them. But if nothing of this import can be alledged by Mr Pitt, I shall continue to think that I cannot surrender that paper without subjecting myself to the imputation of treachery to the public, or, at least, of gross neglect to promote its true interest. I beg leave to trouble you again to show this Letter to Mr Pitt.

I am ever, my dear Sir,
 With great regard,
 Most faithfully your's,
 C. WYVILL.

Paper XIX.

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Right Honourable WILLIAM Pitt.

BURTON-HALL, Jan. 27th, 1796.

Sir,

I Do not trouble you with this Letter, from any doubt respecting the nature of the correspondence which passed between us in the earlier part of our intercourse. I am fully satisfied that the papers alluded to are to be considered, like my correspondence with Lord Lansdown, as papers of a public nature; they were communications on a subject of great importance to the community; they passed between you, in your official capacity as a Minister, or as a Member of Parliament, and the Agent of the Committee of Association of the County of York; who deems himself responsible for his conduct in those political negotiations to the Public, and in a more especial manner to that Body of Men who were his Constituents, and whose confidence in him was the principal, if not the only, motive for those communications. This was my opinion before I addressed my Letter to you, dated February 9th, 1793; and it was formed on an anxious recollection of the circumstances relative to the papers in question, and an attentive examination of their contents: and in that opinion I have been much confirmed, since the proposal which I made to you in a Letter to our common

common Friend, Mr Wilberforce, dated March 7th, 1793. This proposal was relative to the publication or conditional suppression of one of the papers alluded to, intitled, "Heads of a Bill, or Bills, for amending the Representation;" and the Letter containing this proposal, soon after its date, was put into your hand by him, and returned to him by you, without an answer. The proposal was in effect an offer to return or suppress this paper, if you would declare that you understood it to have been a communication not of a public, but of a private nature; provided I might be at liberty to state this declaration to the public, as my justification for the surrender of the paper. And I consider your silence upon the occasion of this offer, as a proof that, although you was unwilling to own, you found yourself unable to deny, that the paper in question is a paper of a public nature, and had been communicated to me under no condition of secrecy, under no restriction or reserve whatever, expressed or understood, at the time of its communication; and that no promise or engagement had been subsequently made on my part, which could justly be construed to have taken away my right to hold this paper as a trustee for the public, and eventually to publish it in the case of your death, or in the case of your hostility to the cause of Reform, and your ultimate refusal to produce it.

But from this clear establishment of my right to publish the paper in question in each of these cases, the duty to publish it immediately is not inferred: In this respect, I think myself warranted

ranted to assume a certain latitude, or discretionary power of delay; and you, Sir, on this occasion, may with reason expect from me every mark of attention which is reconcilable with my duty to the public. I should be extremely sorry to produce this paper to general inspection, if you really mean to publish it in its present form, or improved with such corrections, as the experience of more than ten years in the highest official situation may have suggested to you. And yet it is possible that you meditate no corrections, that you intend to publish the Heads of your Bill neither in their present state, nor in any improved state; it is possible that you may have changed your political opinions, that you may wish to consign the paper in question to oblivion, with every other memorial of those transactions for effecting a Reform of Parliament, in which you bore the principal part. But I still continue to think, as I thought in the earlier period of our connection, that a substantial, moderate, and timely Reformation of Parliament, is necessary for the preservation of our National Liberty. For this purpose, I consider the Heads of your Bill of Reform as an important paper, which I hold in trust for the public; and therefore I could not innocently concur with you to conceal it, if such should be your design; it even seems incumbent upon me to take effectual measures to secure the publication of it, by you or by myself.

I do not assert that you wish to withhold the paper in question from the public eye; but I think that, under the various circumstances of

the

the case, recent and remote, it would be simplicity, it would be folly and credulity in any man to believe that your political system remains as favourable to popular rights as it was in the year 1785. In me it would be the weakness of idiocy, after having witnessed the four last years of your administration, and waited ten years for the production of this paper by yourself, still to confide, still to acquiesce, still to wait on, in silent expectation of its appearance; forgetting the uncertainty of life, the approaching infirmities of age, and foolishly declining to interpose in behalf of the public, till any interposition on my part might be no longer in my power. From these considerations, I am convinced that I ought not to delay explicitly to open my mind to you, and endeavour to obtain a distinct declaration of your intentions.

I do therefore avow my suspicion of your hostility to the cause of Political Reformation, and of your purpose never to publish the paper in question.

The task which this avowal of my distrust compels me to undertake, I feel is a painful one. But it would be falsehood and base flattery to disclaim my suspicion; it would be despicable dissimulation to act as if confidence were entire, and precaution unnecessary; and it would be treachery to the public, to neglect the employment of those obvious means which are within my reach, and by which the production of the document in question by yourself may be secured, or its publication by me may be proved to

to have been a necessary act of justice to the country.

Feeling these impressions on my mind, I am not deterred by the unfavourable circumstance of your having returned no answer to the former proposal, from offering to you one proposition more; and I now offer it with the sincerity of a heart which is unconscious of any inducement but the anxious wish to ascertain and perform my duty to the public, and as far as may be consistent with that duty, to avoid doing what may be unacceptable to you.—My offer is briefly this, that if you will have the goodness to declare, that you intend to publish the Heads of your Bill for reforming the Representation in their present state, or improved by such corrections as your experience may have suggested, I shall most willingly acquiesce, and lay aside my design to publish that paper. But I must be understood to be at liberty to represent this circumstance as my reason for omitting that piece in the 4th volume of Political Papers which I am now preparing for the press; and I must also be considered as still holding that paper in trust for the public.

It is the versatility of the Statesman which I distrust, and appearances may probably be thought to justify the suspicion; yet I still respect, and would rely on, the personal honour and integrity of the Man. And as I will not deny that appearances, however strong they may have been, possibly may have deceived and alarmed me too much; so you, I think, cannot justly

justly alledge that my suspicion has been formed on slight and frivolous grounds, or avowed with unfriendly haste, and in an indecorous tone. If then you really mean to publish your Plan, and in truth you still continue a friend to moderate Reformation, can there be any good reason why so natural a misconception should not be rectified? In such a case, surely, condescension on your part, to remove mistaken fears, and to satisfy honest scruples, could be no dis-honour; as on mine, I trust, acquiescence on the conditions proposed could be no breach of duty to the public.

But if you should deem it expedient to return no answer to this offer, or should answer it in a manner that comes not up to the terms proposed, I shall not hesitate to draw the obvious conclusion from your silence. In that case, I shall proceed, as it may suit my convenience, to publish the paper in question, with the other papers not included in this offer, which passed between us in the course of our correspondence.*

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

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Paper XX.

* This Letter was sent to Mr Pitt, by the post, on the day of its date; and in a short time after that, a Duplicate, in which two or three verbal corrections were made, was sent to James Martin, Esq. the worthy Member for Tewksbury; by whom it was delivered into Mr. Pitt's hands, in the House of Commons, on the 17th of February, 1796. For this kind assistance, Mr Wyvill returns Mr Martin his most sincere and grateful acknowledgments; happy to owe so important a service to a friend equally distinguished for his candour, benevolence, and

Paper XX.

The Case of the Rev. C. Wyvill respecting the Right Honourable WILLIAM Pitt, and his Paper, intituled, "Heads of a Bill or Bills for amending the Representation."

BURTON-HALL, April 6th, 1796.

IT has always been the writer's wish to pass his life in the peace and privacy of a country retirement. It has been his good fortune, and he is thankful for it, to have spent the largest and best portion of his days, since he attained to manhood, in this most pleasant retreat. For the last twenty-two years, he has been an inhabitant of Yorkshire; and during the far greatest part of this period, he has enjoyed domestic peace and happiness in retirement and wedded society, with this added satisfaction during the latter part of this period, that much of his attention, and many of his hours, have been employed in the pleasing cares of educating his numerous family of children, and providing for their interest and future welfare.

During this considerable space of time, amusement has seldom induced him to resort to the crowded haunts of men. Privacy he has preferred, because privacy was more agreeable to his all the milder virtues of private life; and for his firmness and intrepidity in the Senate, as a defender of the rights of his fellow-citizens, and a friend to the true interest of his country.

Of the Duplicate alluded to, the Letter printed here is a copy.—At the time of its publication, no answer had been received from Mr Pitt.

taste.

taste. He was pleased with the blameless occupations, the innocent amusements, of a country life ; he loved the contemplation of nature, and viewed with delight the beauties of the changeful seasons, and the less varying, yet not wholly fixed and stationary, beauties of the scenes around him. But retirement was his choice for reasons of greater weight and gravity. He valued his independence ; he felt the honest pride of a freeman ; and independence and freedom he knew were best preserved at a distance from the prodigality and ensnaring allurements of the capital. He is far, very far, from being as virtuous as he ought, and as he sincerely wishes to be ; yet, though not extremely virtuous, he is a lover of virtue, and though not profoundly learned, he is a friend to learning ; and, in his opinion, the cultivation of virtue, and the pursuits of literature, are usually most successful in retirement. There might be in his temper some alloy of indolence and diffidence, which inclined him to a sequestered life : But even his adversaries are abundantly ready to testify, that, on various public occasions, he has not been slow to stand forth, nor afraid to act his part in the busy scene of politics. He adds, what they will be less willing to acknowledge, that he has never engaged in political business, but from a sense of duty to his country ; from a detestation of corruption, that execrable principle of Government ; from indignation at direct and open invasions of our rights ; and from an honest zeal to defend public liberty, oppressed and endangered by an Administration once friendly to popular rights

—after that, sternly severe and resolute to destroy them.—The ends he aimed at, were the restoration of national morals, then sinking under the debasing influence of our Government; and the preservation of our Constitution on its genuine principles, then nearly defaced by the wear of passing ages, and almost lost under the immense accumulation of abuses. The ends were good and laudable; the means were unexceptionable, and becoming the ends: Argumentation at legal assemblies of the people, petitions, remonstrances, associations, engagements to vote against corruption and corrupt men,—these were the means to attain his objects; these were the weapons of his political warfare; the only weapons he will ever employ; convinced that virtuous men, united for the defence of liberty, by reason alone, must ultimately succeed against all opposition: And hence, in any event, they will be sure to derive the best reward of their labours, that perfect satisfaction of mind, that consciousness of unimpeachable virtue, which no rash appeal to force can ever bestow.

But though it has been his happy lot to lead a great part of his life in privacy and in the country, yet, on the occasions alluded to, he has seen enough of the world of politics to be fully convinced, that neither probity, nor any prudential caution, can secure the opponent of national abuses against the rancorous tooth of calumny. He has seen this in the case of men much better than himself; he has felt it in his own. He knows there are bigots in politics, as in religion; in both he is aware that the rage

rage of passionate men, and the malice of cooler men, interested in the preservation of abuses, ever will pursue the best-intentioned promoters of Reformation. He, therefore, expects no exemption from their injurious attacks; but, trusting in the shield of integrity, he is prepared to meet his adversaries with fortitude, and to bear their slanders with patience. Though he reverence the judgment of the public, he has seldom troubled it with the refutation of calumnies. To any vague imputations of sedition or treason; to any anonymous falsehood, charging him with the guilt of a regicide and a traitor to his country, no reply in future, he trusts, will be necessary: He will leave accusations so wholly destitute of foundation to fall of themselves, as they soon must, down to the ground. Indeed, by some attacks, it would be folly to be provoked or discouraged. The insects which have long been endeavouring to annoy him, bear the hornet's spite in their hearts, and an acrid venom in their tails; but their sting is too feeble to inject it. He would not crush the tiresome creatures; he would only shun them. Does this language sound too contemptuous? He sincerely pities the persons alluded to; but he cannot think of their conduct to him, without some mixture of contempt.

Widely different are the sensations which have been produced in his mind by the censure of men, for whom he has been long accustomed to feel the warmest affection, and the sincerity of whose friendship to him he cannot question. He willingly admits their general candour; he highly

ly esteems their various talents; but he denies the justice of their reprehension respecting his behaviour to Mr Pitt. In this respect, they have condemned *his past* and *his intended* conduct; his allusion to the "Heads" of Mr Pitt's Bill, in the printed Letter to him of February 1793, and his declared intention to publish that paper in the event of Mr Pitt's death, or in the contingency of his hostility to the cause of Reformation, and his ultimate refusal to publish it himself.

He trusts, however, he shall be able to impress on an impartial public the same conviction which he feels himself, viz. that, in the cases alluded to, his conduct has been, and will be, perfectly consistent with the strictest and most correct morality. But if his plea should fail to produce the same conviction on the minds of those friends whose hasty disapprobation he wishes to remove, he will lament his misfortune, and impute it to no personal unkindness, to no deficiency in general candour and equity, but to the warmth of an early friendship for the Minister, or the still more fascinating effect of an enthusiastic admiration of his genius and character. The bias thus hung upon the mind may be unperceived, but its power to mislead the judgment may be strong and nearly irresistible.

The justification of Mr Wyvill's past conduct, in alluding to the "Heads," will be found to rest on the following facts and observations: The force of the observations may be variously felt; the facts, he trusts, will be undisputed by Mr Pitt, or his most partial friends.

1. Mr Wyvill asserts, that the intercourse between Mr Pitt and him was an intercourse not of private friendship and personal attachment, but of political connection on public grounds. His acquaintance with Mr Pitt, as he recollects, commenced in the spring of the year 1780. Mr Pitt was, at that time, a very young man, and had not made his appearance in Parliament. Mr Wyvill was then attending a Meeting of Deputies, appointed to prepare a plan of National Association, for effecting a Reformation of Parliament. He was one of the three Gentlemen delegated by the County of York for that purpose. Viscount Mahon was deputed by the County of Kent to attend the same Meeting. The transaction of the business for which they had been deputed, necessarily required frequent communication between the Deputies: Lord Mahon and Mr Wyvill soon found that they were agreed in their hatred to a corrupt system of Administration; in their zealous attachment to Liberty, on the genuine principles of the Constitution; and in their firm conviction, that, without a radical reform of abuses in the frame of Parliament itself, the official regulations proposed by Burke, as the grand panacea for all our national complaints, would be found no better than trifling alternatives, or transient anodynes, whose slight and insignificant effect would soon be overpowered by the deeply-vitiated habit of our Representative Body. They feared that by a false complaisance in the Meeting of Deputies to the Agent of the old Aristocracy, the opportunity to effect a moderate Reform in the House of Commons might-

be unwisely lost, and thus the nation would be left exposed to the danger, either of an assumption of Despotic Power on the one hand, or the calamities of a violent Revolution on the other hand ; and they were perfectly agreed in their wishes and endeavours to prevent this fatal oversight in the popular counsels at that time.—This general similarity in their principles and views, produced an intimacy between the noble Viscount and the writer, which gradually became confidential, and which the eventful series of sixteen years has not diminished, he trusts, on either side. To his truly noble Friend, Mr Wyvill owed his introduction to Mr Pitt's acquaintance : It was at Lord Mahon's house that he was first made known to Mr Pitt ; but whether the introduction was proposed by Lord Mahon, or desired by Mr Pitt, he does not distinctly recollect.—At this interview, the sentiments of Mr Pitt, on the dangerous situation of the country at that time, on the corrupt state of Parliament, and the necessity for its Reformation at the request and interposition of the people, were similar to those of Lord Mahon and the other Member of the General Deputation. This, at least, was then, and ever since has been, the opinion of Mr Wyvill. To suspect the sincerity of Mr Pitt at that time, must be groundless and injurious jealousy. He had been bred at the feet of Gamaliel in the strictest principles of the Constitution ; he had been imbued by his father with his own ardent love of liberty, his own scorn of corruption, and his strong desire for a purer strain of Government under the controlling

trouling influence of a Reformed Representation. It seems impossible to suppose, that doctrines so congenial to the purity and generous zeal of a youthful mind, recommended by such a Preceptor, and that Preceptor his Father, were not embraced by Mr Pitt with sincerity and ardour. When he heard corruption avowed without shame, and saw it practised with impunity; when the corrupt prodigality of Ministers increased with the public disapprobation of their measures, and their misconduct had driven the country to the brink of ruin, it was natural, and nearly unavoidable, that the Son of Chatham should be indignant at the sight, and should devote his utmost efforts to extirpate this deep-rooted evil, this baneful corruption, from our Parliamentary System.

But for some years after this introduction, their general concurrence in these political sentiments produced little intercourse between Mr Pitt and Mr Wyvill, chiefly for want of opportunity on the part of Mr Wyvill to cultivate an acquaintance he so highly valued. On Mr Pitt's first motion in Parliament on the subject of Reformation,* Mr Wyvill had not the honour of any communication with Mr Pitt. After the rejection of that motion, they both attended a public Meeting at the Thatched House,† when the resolution proposed by Mr Wyvill, with a view to animate the nation to support the intended exertions of Mr Pitt in the succeeding Session, appeared to meet his entire approbation.

* On the 7th of May, 1782.

† On the 18th of May, 1782.

Before that Session commenced, Mr Pitt had entered the Cabinet. His introduction there, added new weight to his recommendation; the declaration of intended support by Lord Shelburne, then principal Minister, was still more encouraging; Yorkshire and many other Districts petitioned for Reform; and on the 7th of May, 1783, Mr Pitt proposed to Parliament resolutions nearly coincident with those propositions which had been adopted by the Association of Yorkshire. On this occasion, Mr Wyvill had the honour of a conference with Mr Pitt; and this interview gradually produced more and more intimate communications. After the defeat of the India Bill in the next Session, Mr Pitt succeeded the Duke of Portland in the station of principal Minister: His efforts for Reform, though unsuccessful, had won him much and deserved popularity; and to that popularity he owed his elevation. In the recent struggle on the India Bill, his friends in Yorkshire had applauded his conduct; and when the House of Commons endeavoured to embarrass the measures of the new Minister, they supported him with vigour at a County Meeting. This was an essential service, which contributed in a considerable degree to fix in his favour the then fluctuating opinion of the public. As soon, therefore, as he found himself a little better secured in the possession of his power, he resolved to gratify his northern friends, and to make another effort, with all his might, to accomplish their favourite measure. On this occasion he changed his ground, and his mode of procedure; and instead of moving for a Committee

mittee of Inquiry, as in 1782, or offering some specific Resolutions; as in 1783, he proposed his new and more-extended measure in the shape of a Bill. The County of York, at a Meeting held some time before, had adopted certain propositions as an amendment to their Association. The principles laid down by Mr Pitt in his speech to Parliament on the 18th of April, 1785, were correspondent with those propositions; but his judgment had suggested various improvements, which his superior skill worked up, and formed a plan of Reformation at once the most extensive and effectual, and at the same time the most mild and practicable, which had been devised.

Soon after this generous resolution had been fixed by Mr Pitt, he communicated his intention to Mr Wyvill; the intercourse between them became more frequent and intimate; and Mr Wyvill had the honour to be consulted in the progress of the business, with respect to the mode of obtaining most effectually the popular support to the intended motion, and also with respect to various modifications and corrections of the Plan. After the rejection of the motion by Parliament in 1785, the same personal intercourse continued for some time; till at last, in 1787, the nation had become indifferent to all questions of Reform, and the hope of success, in that temper of the public, was quite extinguished.—After this period, Mr Wyvill ceased to hold any personal intercourse with Mr Pitt; but their political connection remained unbroken till the beginning of 1793. It had been commenced in 1780, from a similarity of political opinion; it became intimate

made and unreserved during Mr Pitt's struggle to effect a Reformation of Parliament; and it ceased when his hostility to his own former measures appeared to Mr Wyvill, in 1793, to be no longer questionable. It is true, that during this connection much personal esteem and attachment to Mr Pitt were mixed with the political confidence which Mr Wyvill felt and professed: But in 1783, and the three subsequent years, the intercourse between them was not that of private friends, but that of a great Statesman treating with a very humble individual, the confidential Agent of a body of men, whose propositions of Reform he had resolved to adopt, and whose political support he wished to obtain: And therefore, in Mr Wyvill's conception, communications on the public business of his constituents are not to be considered by such Agent as trusts of a private and confidential nature, but are properly to be understood as public communications, unless it were otherwise expressed at the time when such communications were made.

2. Mr Wyvill asserts, that the Letters and other Papers of Mr Pitt, particularly the "*Heads of a Bill, or Bills, for amending the Representation,*" were imparted by him to Mr Wyvill under no seal of secrecy, under no particular restriction or limitation expressed or understood at the time, and that no subsequent promise or engagement was entered into by Mr Wyvill, which in any just or rational construction can be considered as binding him to surrender the Paper in question to Mr Pitt, or to suppress it, or

or during his life not to publish it. It is far from his intention to conceal that, respecting the Heads of Mr Pitt's Bill, a certain promise was made by Mr Wyvill, which he considers himself to have fulfilled literally, and also in its spirit and most extensive meaning. This shall be explained with fidelity, and with all the brevity which may be consistent with clearness and precision.—Immediately, or very soon after the rejection of Mr Pitt's motion on the 18th of April, for amending the Representation, Mr Wyvill waited upon him, and proposed that this Bill might be drawn and published without delay. Among other reasons for the measure, which are alluded to in the Letter of the 29th of July, 1787, this also, as Mr Wyvill believes, was suggested to Mr Pitt, viz. that when the alterations proposed had been distinctly stated and laid before the public in the usual form of a Bill, published by himself, Meetings of the Friends of Political Reformation might be held, by whom the Plan thus authenticated might be considered and approved ; and thus the hitherto disjointed Party of Reformers might be united in one firm and compact Body, by whose unanimous efforts the success of Mr Pitt's exertions, in the next Session, or at least in the course of the existing Parliament, might most probably be secured. To this suggestion, Mr Pitt objected the impossibility of complying with it during this Session, on account of the pressure of public business, and the formidable opposition in Parliament. He wished to reserve the Bill till the favourable moment for carrying it was arrived, and in the mean time to avail

avail himself of all the light which could be thrown upon the subject, in order that every objection might be more maturely considered, every difficulty might be more effectually obviated, and every correction and improvement might be introduced; which would meliorate his Plan, and render it at once acceptable to Parliament and the Public.

Soon after this interview with Mr Pitt, Mr Wyvill was honoured with another, which he requested at the desire of a previous Meeting of Gentlemen, friendly to his moderate proposal of Reformation, and anxious to unite the various bands of Reformers on this ground. Their resolution requesting an authentic copy of his Plan was communicated to Mr Pitt: It was suggested to him, that although, for the reasons lately stated, it might be expedient to postpone the publication of his Bill for some time; yet another method might be taken, if it should meet his approbation, which would answer the purpose for which the Gentlemen had solicited a copy of his Plan: That method was, to substitute a Summary Explanation of the Principles of his Bill, instead of the Bill itself, to be drawn by Mr Wyvill, but authenticated to the intended Meeting by Mr Pitt. This would afford the proper ground for passing resolutions of thanks and approbation; and thus the various sects and subdivisions of the Reformers might be induced to coalesce and support his plan with their united strength. Of this idea Mr Pitt expressed his approbation, provided care were taken in drawing the Summary Explanation, absolutely to avoid every

every allusion to the *Heads of his Bill for amending the Representation*. The reason for this restriction, as Mr Wyvill recollects, was this; that any such allusion would afford an opportunity to some of his acute and vigilant opponents in the House of Commons to call upon him for the publication of the Bill itself; a call with which, for the reasons he had given, it would at that time be extremely inconvenient to comply, and yet with which compliance could not be refused, without hurting his character in the opinion of his reforming friends. With this restriction Mr Wyvill promised that his Explanation should be exactly conformable: It was drawn accordingly, with no reference to the “*Heads*;” it was seen and approved by Mr Pitt, and laid before the Meeting at the Thatched-House on the 24th of May, 1785; with authority from Mr Pitt to declare to the Meeting, that he acknowledged the Explanation to contain an exact and accurate account of the Principles of his intended Bill for amending the Representation. This was the literal performance of the only promise or engagement made by Mr Wyvill respecting the Paper in question; and his silence upon this subject till the year 1793, amounts, in his conception, to the fullest performance of it in spirit and in meaning. A promise not to allude to a certain Paper, upon a particular occasion, and for particular reasons mentioned at the time when the promise is required, is not equivalent to a promise of perpetual secrecy; nor can it be considered as binding on a change of circumstances, under which those reasons have

plainly

plainly ceased to exist. In the year 1785, the Minister's power rested on no stable or secure foundation; the Aristocracy, reinforced by the personal friends, and led by the super-eminent genius, of Mr Fox, presented to Mr Pitt a formidable phalanx of opponents, and the Crown viewed him with fear and jealousy, which nothing could have overcome but the superior dread of his Great Rival. In this arduous and critical situation, Mr Pitt feared to call forth the animadversions of his adversaries on the subject of Reform, for they might prove extremely embarrassing; and he wished not to excite the suspicions of his earliest and most sincere friends, for their support could not then be spared. But in 1793, the circumstances of his political situation were advantageously changed: The confidence of the Crown was won; the strength of his Rival was weakened by desertions; the great Body of the Aristocracy was united with him, and his exorbitant power seemed fixed on a solid and permanent foundation: From the opposition of his Antagonist, he had nothing to fear; from the assistance of his Reforming Friends, he had nothing to hope. Thus circumstanced, he did not scruple to give his negative, in a less peremptory tone at first, to Mr Flood's proposition of Reform in the year 1790; and in 1792, he opposed, with an appearance of more confirmed hostility, an intimation of a similar motion by Mr Grey, and the motion itself in 1793. From this conduct it seems rightly to be collected, that the reasons no longer existed for which silence had been required and promised; and, therefore,

that

that Mr Wyvill's engagement had been completely fulfilled in spirit, as well as in the letter of it, by his silence down to the year 1793. The justice of this conclusion will be farther confirmed by the consideration, that silence was required by Mr Pitt, not merely to prevent embarrassment to himself, but also for other more important reasons. In 1785 he was undoubtedly a zealous friend to the Reformation of Parliament; honour and interest concurred with his early prejudices to inspire that zeal; they pointed to that line of conduct as the road at once to power and true glory. When he delivered the Heads of his Bill to Mr Wyvill, the Paper was unaccompanied with any condition or reserve whatever. To determine with what intention it was thus delivered, it must be considered what were his principles, what were his views at that time: These, it has been seen, were decidedly favourable to the cause of Reformation; and hence the conclusion follows undeniably, that the Paper in question was put into Mr Wyvill's hands with a view to promote the cause of Reformation. Within two months after this Paper had been thus committed to Mr Wyvill's custody, in trust for the public, Mr Pitt required secrecy respecting it, on a particular occasion, for public as well as private reasons, which have been already stated, exactly conformable with that view which at first induced him to deliver it to Mr Wyvill. The reserve was necessary, to prevent inconvenience to himself; it was necessary also, to prevent injury to the common cause. The personal inconvenience was

a circumstance of transient duration; and respecting it, the writer's obligation to silence seems to have been fulfilled in 1793. He, therefore, considered himself as then free from that engagement, and under the sole obligation, in conformity with the trust originally reposed in him, to consult the interest of the cause of Reformation. The least extended idea of that trust bound him, he thought, to hold "*The Heads*" in behalf of the public, and in the contingent events of Mr Pitt's death, or his absolute hostility to Reform, to lay that Paper before the public.

In the event of Mr Pitt's death, the obligation to publish the Heads seems incontestible; and by parity of reason, in the event of his manifest hostility to Reform, the same obligation seems equally well founded. For let it be supposed, that from a change of interest or opinion, the ardour of Mr Pitt to defend the rights of the people is cooled, that his patriotic spirit is damped and extinguished by the mephitic gas of the House of Commons, that his feelings are dead to the cause of Reformation, and alive only to the support of that system which he had solemnly engaged to destroy: In these circumstances, it is evident that the publication in question would be more necessary than it would have been even in the contingency of the Minister's death. If that event had happened a few years ago, it would have deprived the cause of Reformation of its ablest and most powerful advocate: By his hostility to that cause, the Reformers not only lose their Leader, but they find his abilities turned against them; aided by the imposing credit which

which his former zeal had procured him—reinforced by the formidable power of that station to which their confidence had contributed to raise him. To ascertain that hostility with precision, may be a task as difficult as it must be painful to the Trustee; but from the fact once clearly established, his obligation to publish results with equal certainty in this case as in the other, and the necessity for it is more indispensable. Such in 1793 were his conceptions of the nature of the trust reposed in him, and such his ideas of the duty which future circumstances might call him to perform.

At that time the tenor of Mr Pitt's conduct for some years had excited strong suspicions in his mind, that the public principles of the Minister were changed, that he was become hostile to Reformation, and never would publish his Bill. He felt it to be his duty, if time should prove these suspicions to be just, neither to concur with Mr Pitt in his tergiversation, nor in compliance with his new system to suppress the Paper in question; but in conformity with his intentions when that Paper was communicated, to execute his trust with fidelity to the public. In pursuance of these ideas, the allusion to the "Heads" was published in 1793; it was an intimation to Mr Pitt, but less distinct and explicit than a subsequent intimation, that his sincerity was suspected; and it was a notification to him, that, *in certain conceivable circumstances*, Mr Wyvill held himself bound to publish this Paper.

From these plain facts and observations, he trusts, it will be the decision of his candid and

impartial judges, that the allusion in 1793 to the "Heads" of Mr Pitt's Bill was an innocent and justifiable action. On the same grounds it may be admitted also, that he has a right to hold that Paper in trust for the public, and to publish it in the event of Mr Pitt's death; and even before that event, in the case of his manifest hostility to the cause of Reformation. That right he may be allowed to possess; but to exercise it upon slight presumptions, conjectural surmises, or even plausible probabilities of Mr Pitt's tergiversation, this, it may be said, would be inviolous and unbecoming; and if not a breach of trust, would at least be a very indiscreet, or a very malevolent, abuse of it. And here it is readily granted, that the publication of that Paper without the Donor's consent, on a hasty and slightly founded supposition of hostility, would be reprehensible conduct in the Trustee; but he contends, that, on a rapid review of the whole case, the proofs will be found completely satisfactory; such as a man of candour will assent to—such as a man of probity ought to act on; and to which no additional strength of evidence could well be given, but by a direct avowal of hostility from the Minister himself; for which the Trustee surely cannot be expected to wait.

I. From the rejection of Mr Pitt's motion of Reform in 1785, to the present moment, is a period of nearly eleven years. During this long course of time, Mr Pitt has not found a proper opportunity to publish his Bill, or to bring forward his motion of Reform afresh; and to the propositions which other Reformers have advanced,

ced, at different times, he has given his uniform opposition. To justify his inactivity in the former part of this period, it may be truly alledged, that the public was become too languid in the pursuit of Reformation to afford a prospect of success; to excuse it in the latter part, it may be pretended, that the great mass of the people were become so zealous for Reform, and had adopted such extensive expectations of change, that any attempt to innovate would be dangerous. But the transitions of popular opinion are not like those of the weather, sudden and momentary; the passage of the nation from cold to hot, from too little zeal to too much, was undoubtedly gradual; and in this progress of opinion, there must have been a time when the nation had reached that happy temperature of zeal, without excess, when moderate Reform might have been proposed with safety, and with a fair probability of success. Why was not this attempted by the Minister in the year 1790, or in 1791? Surely not because there was then too much zeal for change; for a contrary reason was opposed to Mr Flood. And why did he discourage Reform in the two succeeding years? Surely not because there was too little zeal for Reformation; for a contrary reason was opposed to Mr Grey. Mr Pitt is too sagacious to have overlooked the golden opportunity; the just conclusion is, his system was changed.

2. With this conclusion his other measures about this time accord, and confirm the supposition. The Proclamations against Sedition were drawn in terms of such extensive import, as

would have condemned himself and his own former measures, had a similar edict been issued in the year 1782. The professed object of these Proclamations was, to stigmatize and disgrace the rash Republican, who had then dared to libel the Constitution of England; and his deluded followers, who aimed with him not to repair, but to overthrow, the fabric of our Government. But by the insidious terms in which those Proclamations were drawn, the former friends of the Minister were comprehended in the common mass of seditious delinquents, and the peaceful adherents of his own moderate plan of Reformation were injuriously classed with men who sought the establishment of a democratic Government through all the calamities of a civil war and a forcible Revolution.

3. After having thus disgraced the cause of moderate Reform in the eyes of the public, and exposed his earliest friends to the malice of informers and the rage of political bigots, he has pursued the less cautious Reformers in every part of the kingdom with unrelenting severity; the conviction of some of these unfortunate persons has been effected in a mode disgraceful to the Judicature of our country, and the punishment inflicted upon others has been such as humanity cannot but lament and disapprove. Of some of these patriot criminals the only guilt has been, that they presumed to express, in language once the Minister's, their contempt and detestation of public abuses: of others the crime proved has been, that, following his example, they have dared to animate and exhort the people in their several counties

counties and districts to meet, to associate, and to exert every legal power then vested in the collective body to destroy those abuses, and restore the Legislature to its ancient purity. For offences like these, they have been tried as incendiaries and felons; they have been doomed to long imprisonment, or a worse transportation to a savage land. After that, the rancour of official prosecution charged some of the most distinguished of these Reformers with the guilt of Treason. A part of them were tried and absolved by their country; but ministerial petulance dared to condemn them. At last the Juries, by their unshaken adherence to justice, discouraged the odious pursuit; and the rest of these victims were dismissed without a trial, to repair their health and fortunes, shattered and broken by the rigours of confinement, and to enjoy their innocence as well as they could in the bosom of their ruined families. Some of those persons might be rash and misguided zealots, who advanced inadmissible claims of Reform, and promoted those claims by means which no friend to peace and order will undertake to justify. Universal suffrage seems to be unadvisable in the present corrupt state of society: extremely numerous assemblies of the people always have some tendency to disorder and tumult; and in any state of society, disorder and tumult ought to be checked and repressed. But to a Government supported as our's is, by an immense revenue, and the greatest military force ever maintained in Britain, a few rash men could not be justly formidable. To the Minister of Reform

they were objects not of his vindictive pursuit, but of his lenity and forbearance; for his example had misled them. Instead, therefore, of exaggerating their indiscretions into acts of Treason, it would have well become him to have pardoned them; mixing with his mercy due vigilance to prevent any dangerous excesses, and hastening to close the source of discontent and disturbance, by granting a prudent redress of those grievances, of which, he cannot deny, they justly complain.

But instead of redress, the Minister gave the people a war; furious, bloody, and portending incalculable evils to England. The origin of this great calamity may be traced with probability to a concurrence of circumstances apparently fortuitous and insignificant. It chanced, or, to speak more properly, it was permitted by Providence, that, during the tempests of the French Revolution, two very extraordinary men, Thomas Paine and Edmund Burke, should appear in this country: Each of these personages is endowed with that fanatical zeal, and that heat and irritability of temper, by which the possessor is fitted, in suitable conjunctures, and with adequate talents, to spread the flames of war, and to promote Revolutions in the world. Thomas Paine is unlearned; but nature has given him a strong, though coarse, understanding, with much originality of thought and energy of expression. He is fitted by nature to be a democratic Leader; and early prejudice, habit, and a variety of accidental circumstances, confirmed the original tendency of his mind. Edmund Burke has had the advantage of

a learned education: His genius is showy, but not solid; copious, but not correct. His judgment is inferior to that of many of his contemporaries; but he unites industry with wit, humour, and a brilliant, though disordered, imagination: His elocution is rapid, and well adapted to the sportive or impetuous style of oratory in which he excels; but he is seldom argumentative, and more seldom convincing. Had literature been his professional pursuit, he might have shone through many a volume a splendid, superficial Rhetorician, decked in the ornaments of a glittering eloquence, and proud of his tinsel. For philosophical research, his faculties are less fit; and in the more abstruse sciences he probably never could have discovered one important truth; but, like Fontenelle, he might have explained what others had invented, and might have embellished the system of Newton with wit, pathos, and all the tinkling trappings of his metaphorical style. But he was doomed to be a politician; and the pride of genius and learning fitted him to be an aristocrat. Early connection with an honoured Nobleman confirmed this natural and acquired tendency; he was at first his dependent; then, freed from that servitude by his noble Patron's munificence at his death, he became the counsellor and confidential guide of an alarmed aristocracy. At the period alluded to, the popular societies for Reform had received a rapid increase: The grateful zealots of aristocracy trembled with rage and fear at the approaching ruin of their usurpations. But one great effort to save them must be made; and,

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fortunately for his purpose, the excesses of the French Revolution held out a consoling hope that the system of abuses might be prolonged, perhaps perpetuated. He described those excesses, and predicted more, in the tragic colours of an eloquence but too well suited to their enormity; and events still gratified his humanity with the fulfilment of his predictions. On this occasion, the rash Republican who had before denied that we have a Constitution, stept forth a second time into the field of combat, and, in his rage for confusion, proposed an Agrarian tax for England, holding forth to the poor the plunder of the rich. This was the very act of folly and temerity which his aristocratic antagonist probably wished; and now Burke, with the united aristocracy at his back, called with impetuous vociferation for a crusade against France, and the dormancy of our Constitution. This was the critical period of Mr Pitt's administration. If the Minister, at that time, had firmly opposed each of these combustible politicians; if he had secured the peace of the country against the wild projects of Paine, and resisted the counsels of Burke, as wild, and in the event far more pernicious, he would have been the greatest benefactor to the country and to mankind. He might, indeed, have been turned out of his official situation; but the unanimous voice of a grateful public would soon have recalled him to it, with full power to carry into effect those necessary plans of Reformation with which his political course had been begun. Instead of thus mounting to the summit of true glory, and there placing

placing himself on a level with Washington, he was discouraged by the short difficulties of the ascent; he chose to descend from the eminence he had attained, and to keep the undisturbed possession of the first seat at the Board of Treasury. Sound policy required him to hold a middle course between the two dangerous extremes of Paine and Burke. But Burke's violence in the Senate for a war with France was not ill adapted to the new system of the Minister, and it gradually appeased their long hostility. Instead of shunning each of these inflammatory men, he flew from the turbulent Republican to embrace the factious Enthusiast of the Aristocracy. To the wildest flights of Burke's maddening imagination he nodded approbation; and Burke declared himself much dulcified to him. Soon after that, negociation, humbly and repeatedly sought by the Government of France, was proudly rejected by the English Minister; the military force by sea and land was rapidly augmented, and nothing but a pretext seemed wanting for an immediate commencement of hostilities. But when war is resolved on, a pretext can never be long wanted. The pretext found, was the death of Louis the Sixteenth, after a declaration in the English Parliament that peace or war should be the consequence of the pardon or execution of that Monarch. On this unjust interference depended a question which involved the fate of a great part of mankind. The declaration hastened the death of the unfortunate Monarch it was meant to save, and that event to the English Cabinet was decisive for

for war ; and yet high authority has not scrupled to call it a just and necessary war.

It is true that the determination for war was not without some pretence of provocation to this country ; but it was such provocation as our own conduct had excited, and such as a Washington would have pardoned in a nation struggling for liberty, inflamed and almost distracted in the paroxysm of a revolutionary fever. His humane and prudent policy might have taught the Minister not to have sought pretexts for war, but to have shunned them ; to have been prepared for defence, but to have maintained neutrality ; and to have tried every expedient of patience and temperate negotiation to have preserved the peace of his country. Such was the actual conduct of the wise Statesman of America under similar or greater provocations from France ; and such would have been the counsel of Burke, if he had been cool, disinterested, and wise like Washington. But the character of our pensioned Politician is the very reverse ; in his temper, passionate and fiery ; in his pursuit of power and emolument, eager and indefatigable ; in his public counsels, rash and violent : his claims to the honours of a true Patriot or a wise Statesman will be disallowed by posterity. In public life he has neither been independent nor disinterested. Before the French Revolution, the general tenor of his conduct was little useful to his country ; after that event, it has been pernicious both to his country and to the general interests of humanity.

Unfortunately, the Minister preferred the furious

rious suggestions of a passionate Disclaimer to the example of Washington's just and humane policy ; possibly, too, the unjust and delusive hope to dismember France and aggrandize Great-Britain might contribute to mislead him. The avowed purpose of the war, at least it was avowed by the Minister's new adviser, was to perpetuate the established system of abuses ; to beat down and for ever suppress the *Jacobinical* principles of Locke and Sidney, of Savile and Chatham.— And what has been the result of this war, so eagerly commenced, on views so just and reasonable ? An unprecedented expence of blood and treasure ; a long series of disasters, intermixed with successes few and inadequate ; impending famine ; approaching bankruptcy ; and an aggravation of national discontent, accompanied with unequivocal proofs, personally applied to the Minister, of the anger and resentment of the people. The system of war and coercion, instead of appeasing the popular discontents, has been found to inflame them ; and the clamours of a starving populace have daily resounded louder and louder in the ears of Majesty for Peace and a Reform of Parliament.

5. But hence have been furnished fresh pretexts to the Minister for his enterprizes against the rights and liberty of his country. To stifle these complaints, the galling cord of coercion has been strained with augmented rigour, and suddenly the people have found themselves exposed, by a new and severe statute, to *vague and constructive charges of Treason* ; and by another act, more dangerous still, deprived of their ancient

cient and indubitable right to *Free Discussion* and *Free Petition*. In vain was it pleaded by the advocates of these rights, that, for the fault of a few desperate individuals, innocent millions ought not, and justly could not, forfeit their undoubted rights; in vain was it pleaded, that, as far as human laws can protect them, the ancient law of the land was clearly sufficient to protect his Majesty's Person and Government; that to violate the privileges of the people, solemnly stipulated for them at the Revolution, and confirmed by the Bill of Rights, was a procedure big with injustice and danger; that a precedent thus trenching on that fundamental law had a manifest tendency to unsettle the Government, and if not quickly reversed by Parliament, on the remonstrances of an injured and indignant people, would lead by certain consequence either to confusion, or the speedy extirpation of our liberties. The influence of the Minister of Reform prevailed; the injurious Bills were passed; the people were restrained in the exercise of their right to petition, and by this privation the only rational ground of hope was lost, that a peaceful interposition of the people might effect a Reformation of Parliament. By a vigorous exertion the nation may recover these lost rights, and with them restore the prospect of a future redress of their other grievances; but after this conduct of the Minister, no change of measures can restore to him the lost esteem and confidence of the public. Let Mr Pitt's most partial friends now declare, whether his hostility to Reform be still problematical; or, whether the tenor of his conduct

conduct has not clearly demonstrated that he is become an enemy to that necessary measure.

This is the material point in the present Case; it is the hinge on which the judgment of his judges will turn, either to approve or censure the conduct of the Trustee. If this point be clearly established, as he hopes it is, objections drawn from the temper of the times can have little weight to dissuade the publication. It is not his intention to aggravate faults, or to inflame discontent: the faults have been committed, and the discontent has been excited; and it is his purpose to demonstrate those faults, in order only that they may be corrected; to evince the justice of the popular complaint, only that it may be redressed; and to point out the approaching danger, only that it may be avoided. He wishes to impress on the persons chiefly concerned, what he conceives to be incontestible truths; that it were better and wiser to endeavour to conciliate than to crush the people; that it were more just, more humane, and safer too, to make reasonable and prudent concessions, than to attempt to suppress the spirit of Reform by the strong hand of military power. Concession may secure the public tranquillity, and augment the public happiness; the attempt to compel submission without redress would be equally ruinous whether, in the fatal contest that must ensue, the people were victors or overcome. Before the war with France took place, he foresaw that the system so vehemently pressed by the zealot of aristocracy could tend to nothing but an aggravation of the then existing discontent, and finally

finally to desperation and national confusion. In his public Letter to Mr Pitt, he stated these evils as the too probable consequence of a great foreign war, and an internal system adverse to the rights of the people. In the progress of this unfortunate war, and in the evolution of this unpopular system, their calamitous consequences have but too plainly and distinctly verified the former part of his prediction; and aggravated discontent now threatens that catastrophe which every good citizen must deprecate and wish to avert. In this perilous state of the country, he wishes to ask men in power, Shall we persevere in the measures which have manifestly produced this alarming change in the temper of the people? Shall we persevere in this fatal war, contending at every possible risque for advantages; some of which are ideal, some may be more substantial, but are evidently unattainable? Shall we persevere in the system of internal coercion, protecting acknowledged abuses, and advancing with hasty strides, like ravishers in open day, to invade the rights of the people, and violate the prostrate Constitution? Is it thus we expect to secure the tranquillity of the country, by leaving the great mass of the community no property to lose, and no privilege which they can think secure? In this dangerous crisis, is it the part of a faithful subject and real well-wisher to his country to dissemble grievances; to acquiesce under the dangerous policy of the new system, and suffer a daring Minister to go on, unwarned, heaping misery upon misery, till the vessel of national patience be filled and run over? Or, is it not rather truly becoming that

that character, to raise his voice, however feeble it may be; and to beseech and adjure the Representatives of the nation to return to the ways of peace and safety; to exert their constitutional powers to close the unjust and fatal contest with France; and to redress with moderation and prudence, before it be too late, those great and acknowledged grievances of which the public complain? There was in the year 1780 more violent fermentation in the minds of the lower classes of the people, and it burst out in acts of more extensive and dangerous outrage than those which have been witnessed at this time. Indolent, and perhaps timid, as Lord North was, he resisted the demands of an intolerant populace, and he did well. He was nobly supported in it by Sir G. Savile and other wise Patriots of that day: With all their regard for the sense of the people, with all their condescension for their prejudices, they felt the disgrace which must attend their yielding to the barbarous wish of intolerance; they felt they had acted aright in extending toleration; and they generously resolved to brave the popular fury, and maintain the benevolent system they had established. The misguided people were ashamed of their unjust and intemperate conduct; and the just firmness of Parliament abashed intolerance for ever. But far different from the wisdom of that perseverance would be the resolution of Parliament to persist in supporting the new system of the Minister. The lower classes of the people may manifest symptoms of impatient discontent, against which the Executive Government ought to keep a vigilant guard; but the

Legislature is bound to appease that discontent, if possible, by lenient and conciliatory means.

It is, perhaps, among things possible, that leniency and prudent concession might fail to soothe and pacify the people, and restore perfect harmony and tranquillity to the country; but a bare possibility of a failure is no sufficient reason why the humane experiment should not first be tried. If it should succeed, a world of misery would be saved; but till the effect of lenient measures has been proved, a system of coercion and restraint is neither just nor politic. It is unjust to cavil at the cries of the people, and to refuse redress, because it may be asked with impatience, in too loud a tone; it is in these times doubly impolitic to alienate their affections, when justice is all they ask. The abuses which are complained of are real and most pernicious abuses; the best and wisest men in the kingdom, with the Minister himself at their head, have sanctioned their complaints, and proposed redress. The people are now contending against usurpations and abuses, the necessary consequence of which, if uncorrected, must be the loss of public liberty, the depravation of public morals, and a Government supported against the virtue and good sense of the nation; first, by corruption; at last, by tyrannical force alone. Universal suffrage may be an inadmissible principle of Reform in the present state of this country, and immensely numerous assemblies of the people may well excite some apprehension of tumult; but to suppress these great assemblies by penal laws, and leave the discontents of the people unappeased by any redress,

may

may produce a short interval of calm, but it will soon be succeeded by greater storms than ever. The means proposed by the people for effecting their end may be improper, but the end itself is good and laudable. To cut off confessed abuses, and to destroy corruption, they are sure must be proper, and it is now their turn to feel they are right. The perseverance of Parliament would not now abash them ; it would but increase and exasperate their discontent ; and thus Parliament might too probably lose their confidence for ever.

To prevent this fatal evil, and to secure the genuine principles of the Constitution, must be the wish of every good citizen. Except the few Patrons of Boroughs, Peers, and Commoners, who form an Aristocracy which is unknown and hostile to the Constitution, all are interested to promote a temperate Reform of those abuses which constitute the power of that Aristocracy. Some of these Peers and Commoners, on whom the chance of their birth has devolved a share in the unconstitutional powers alluded to, have nobly set the example of preferring the just security of the people's rights to the retention of an odious and unjust command. If aught of prudence or an honourable shame, or a still more laudable feeling of benevolence, could induce a few of their brethren to renounce that iniquitous patronage, all might yet be well. Let the new system of the Minister be abandoned ; let peace be concluded with France on equitable terms ; let a Reformation of Parliament, on Mr Pitt's safe and moderate plan, be granted, with a restoration of our

ancient and indubitable right to free discussion and free petition, and the quiet and happiness of the country will be effectually secured. These are the means, the only means, by which the nation may be restored to that good temper on which the preservation of its internal peace depends, and to that cordial esteem and veneration for its Government, in which, after the conclusion of a peace with France, the only just and permanent security can be found against the increasing power of the French Republic, and against the progress of their democratic principles.

The motives which have been assigned for the Trustee's suspicion, and consequent breach with Mr Pitt, he is confident will not be questioned by his honourable friends, on whose account he first thought of drawing this plea, in the anxious hope to obtain their acquittal and approbation: But, he doubts not, it will be said by uncandid bigots, and mercenary adherents to the Minister, that the breach, and the subsequent publications, have been occasioned by pique and resentment. To this random objection it might be sufficient to return an answer when any particular cause of offence were assigned, or any particular time were fixed when this pretended pique and resentment took place: But Mr Wyvill will not allow a surmise so false the existence of a moment. He asserts, and he believes that Mr Pitt and his honourable friends are too just not to confirm the assertion, that the conduct of Mr Wyvill in publishing his correspondence with Mr Pitt has not originated in any personal quarrel. No time can be fixed as
the

moment when any supposed offence was given; nor can any sort of incivility be specified, which it will not be easy for Mr Wyvill to disprove. The conjecture has no foundation in fact, and is nothing more than an imaginary supposition. Mr Wyvill never received aught at the hands of Mr Pitt but personal civility, with many proofs of his esteem and regard. For those civilities, and for the esteem and confidence with which Mr Pitt was pleased to honour him, he returned gratitude and affectionate attachment, increased by high respect for his political character. In his public demeanour, and in debate with his antagonists, Mr Pitt may be lofty and daring; but in his deportment in private society there is much ease and affability: He possesses a rich fund of benignity and good-nature; and it is not easy to approach him in the freedom of friendly intimacy, without feeling a strong predilection for him. Mr Wyvill loved the Man, and looked up to the Minister with reverence and veneration, as a truly Patriot Statesman, devoted to combat and destroy the monstrous system of corruption, and destined to the high honour to be the political saviour of his country. In the estimation of Mr Wyvill, his connection with Mr Pitt was the pride and honour of his life: But in the progress of his administration, events occurred which inspired some serious suspicions of his real intention and views, and gradually lowered this lofty idea of his character. Confidence in a pure and exalted character is a pleasing sensation; it is always quitted with reluctance; and the beginning of this distrust was,

to the writer, matter of deep regret and mortification. A painful struggle ensued between habitual prejudice and personal regard on the one side, and growing distrust and public duty on the other. At last, by the farther unfolding of his new system, in the course of a few years, suspicion was gradually changed into conviction, duty overcame the united powers of prejudice and personal partiality, the connection with Mr Pitt was resigned, and the letter of Feb. 9, 1793, announcing this publication, was laid before the public.

From the same uncandid and mercenary quarters may be expected another surmise equally contrary to fact, and for which not the slightest appearance of probability can be pleaded. It will probably be said, that Mr Wyvill is a man chagrined by disappointment in his ambitious views through Mr Pitt; that his present conduct is dictated by the usual selfishness of politicians; that he wishes thus to recommend himself to new connections, and, by their assistance, to pursue more successfully his favourite objects, the acquisition of professional dignity, or the renewal of family honour. He does not affect to despise the honours of his profession; he does not pretend to think that the recovery of the rank long held by those who preceded him in the possession of his patrimony would be no benefit to his family: But these acquisitions have not been the objects of his ambition.

When he commenced his political course in Yorkshire, near seventeen years ago, some of the Gentlemen of this County, for whose virtue

virtue and public views he feels the sincerest respect, were pleased to express their confidence in his integrity. His reply was, that he hoped their confidence would remain undiminished, as long as his situation should remain unchanged. He is not totally unexperienced in the world, or absolutely ignorant of the ways and passages, though often dark and intricate, by which promotion may be most successfully attained. When their confidence had opened to him the door of advancement, he could have availed himself of the opportunity, if to profit by his politics had been his design. His visible situation is now exactly what it was then; it is, in fact, the same situation. To this decisive circumstance he might trust the sure, though silent, confutation of the misrepresentation he has here anticipated.

But he wishes not to leave his innocence respecting the supposed imputation to be inferred by the candour or lenity of his judges: His answer shall be direct and explicit. He asserts, therefore, and once more he trusts Mr Pitt will confirm the assertion, that he has never asked or accepted from him any favour, great or small, either for himself or any of his friends. He might justly extend the same assertion to all the other persons in ministerial stations with whom it has been his fortune to have any intercourse or connection. The supposed charge, therefore, that his present conduct is the effect of chagrin and disappointment, must be altogether unfounded.

Mr Wyvill was aware, that there is in the best of men a great portion of frailty and fallibility; that the temptations to which they are exposed

in public life are strong and numerous, and that the human heart is apt to be corrupted by the long possession of power. Of Mr Pitt's integrity and wisdom his esteem was high; but he knew the extreme difficulty of the enterprise he had undertaken: He knew his virtue would be assailed by every possible temptation which the Court and the Aristocracy could employ to intimidate or seduce him from his purpose; and even Mr Pitt's virtue might yield to their temptations. It was possible that he might shrink from the glorious task he had engaged in, and, instead of persevering in the struggle to bestow on his country the secure enjoyment of its liberty, under a Government controuled by a reformed and virtuous Representative of the People, he might turn his whole power and credit to support established abuses and corruptions. He felt, therefore, that it was possible the imperious voice of duty might call upon him to renounce his connection, and to oppose him in the prosecution of his new system of Administration. But obligation and independence are incompatible; and public duty can only be performed with unblemished integrity by men who have kept their minds free and uninfluenced by favours. He, therefore, determined to preserve his freedom and independence, by never mingling with the crowd of servile and selfish men, who seek emolument or honours at the levees of a Minister: He never stooped to solicit or accept any ministerial favour: He is, and always has been, absolutely free from obligation to the present Minister, and all his predecessors in power;

and

and the result of the freedom of judgment thus preserved is the conduct which has been here explained to the public.

But no proof of innocence can be so clear and cogent as to convince the enraged bigot, or reduce the hireling advocate of power to silence. No misrepresentation is too bold and daring for the front of the hireling; no calumny is too gross and absurd for the credulity of the bigot. Even after the statement of these facts, the charge of ambition probably will be repeated; but it will meet the silence of the injured person, and the reprobation of impartial and equitable men. They will have seen the proofs of his probity; and, he trusts, they will not suffer the opinion established on the firm foundation of these facts to be overturned by the breath of rumour or idle surmise. Judging of his present intention by his past conduct, they will not easily credit the assertion, that he who hitherto has shunned the snares of obligation with so much care, is now willing to entangle himself in them; that the man so jealous of his independence, who long supported the Minister, but never would be his partizan, is now seeking to be the vassal of some new political chieftain, and to sacrifice the conscious pride of integrity to the base views of a selfish ambition. It is true he honours the great Statesmen, and their co-adjudicators in each House of Parliament, who have opposed the new system of the Minister: He approves their principles; he admires their talents; he applauds their perseverance; and, as far as his slender means permit, he will co-operate with

with them to save the sinking liberties of his country. But he is not their follower or their partisan; he is, and he will be, the partisan and servant to the public alone.

Such is the plea for *the past* and *the intended conduct* of the Writer respecting Mr Pitt, and the Paper which he intrusted to his custody. It is conduct which has been hastily blamed by men, whose acquittal and approbation on this explanation of facts and their motives he still covets, and is not without hope to obtain. But if, after this statement, Mr Pitt's honourable friends alluded to should retain their unfavourable opinion, it is conduct which he will not regret, if men, partial neither to the Minister nor himself, shall pronounce his absolution. To the judgment of an impartial public, therefore, he commits his case; and he awaits their decision with respect, but without fear or perturbation. In the course of political business in which he has been engaged, he is conscious of having acted with integrity; and on the present occasion it has been his most anxious endeavour to do his duty to the public, and at the same time to avoid all injustice or personal disrespect to Mr Pitt. But it is possible, that, either from the strength of his zeal, or the weakness of his judgment, he may have fallen into some error respecting the nature of the trust in question. He is absolutely unconscious of it, and he hopes it has not really happened. But if, in the judgment of candid, judicious, and experienced men, he has been thus misled, and without impropriety cannot publish the Paper in question without the consent of Mr Pitt, he is

is not inclined to controvert the judgment of such men, or to persist in his present intention against their decision. He will bow with deference to the authority of such men, and, in conformity with their opinion, will postpone the intended publication: And, he trusts, that with them the rectitude of his intention may plead his excuse for unperceived and involuntary error. But if he has been fortunate enough to convince them that he holds that Paper in trust for the public, and that, under the circumstances stated, he has a right to publish it, their opinion will confirm his own, and he will, without delay, produce the Paper in dispute.

In times like the present it cannot be dangerous to draw the attention of the public to the mild, but effectual, plan of Reformation proposed by Mr Pitt in the purer period of his Administration. It was then proposed, because it was thought expedient to allay the just dissatisfaction of the people: It is more expedient now, because their discontent is greater; it has been increased by delay and disappointment, and nothing but redress can terminate with safety the present fermentation. It is the disposition to refuse redress which is dangerous, not the statement of moderate terms on which it may be prudent to ask it, nor the resolution to concede when such terms are asked by an aggrieved people. The plan proposed by Mr Pitt would be safe for every class and order in the State, more especially for those on whom the dread of innovation may be supposed to operate with greatest power. It would be safe for the Crown; it would

would be safe for the Peerage also : it would check the tendency to Republican principles ; it would rescind the usurpations of a factitious, illegal, and self-created Aristocracy, which now domineers over all the constituted Authorities ; it would restore the Peerage to its just dignity, as the true and honoured Aristocracy of the land ; and by rendering the Commons House of Parliament a fair Representative of the nation, it would free the Monarchy from the shackles of an unconstitutional cabal, and at once content the people, and secure the permanence of a justly-limited monarchical Government. It is a plan calculated to avert the impending dangers of anarchy and despotism ; to protect, with equal energy, the property and the liberty of the country ; and to preserve alike the internal peace and the constitutional rights of the community, under the incorruptible guard of a reformed and virtuous Representation.

C. WYVILL.

APPEN-

APPENDIX.

Paper I.

*Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Rev.
JAMES WILKINSON.*

NEROT'S HOTEL, KING-STREET, ST JAMES'S,
Dec. 9, 1784.

Dear Sir,

I hope Mr Shore has had an opportunity to shew you my first Letter, in which I gave him an account of what passed most material in my conversation with Mr Pitt on Monday. By appointment, I saw him again yesterday, and had another long and very confidential conversation with him. I trust you think I have not been hasty in giving my esteem to Ministers, or too apt to vouch for the integrity of their intentions. But, on this occasion, I feel I should act a mean and an ungenerous part if I did not most explicitly declare, that if I had entertained any doubt before, respecting Mr Pitt's zeal for the public cause, which I certainly did not, these conversations must have convinced me of the purity of his political character, and his sincere and particular attachment to the cause of Parliamentary Reformation. I have not the smallest doubt

doubt that he will exert himself to the utmost of his strength in the approaching Session of Parliament, and put forth his whole power and credit *as a Man and as a Minister, honestly and boldly* to carry a plan of Reform, by which our liberties will be placed on a footing of permanent security. I am happy to add, the prospect of success is improved beyond our utmost expectations.

In consequence of this second conversation, the idea I expressed to Mr Shore, of the propriety, and even necessity, of a County Meeting for Yorkshire this winter, is much confirmed. It is due not only to the public cause, and to that consistency of character which every man of honour wishes to preserve, but in justice also to a Minister, who, for the public good, is resolved to act so nobly disinterested a part.—I have only time to add,

I am ever, my dear Sir,
Most cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

Paper II.

**LETTER from the Rev. C. WYVILL to General
HALE.**

NEROT'S HOTEL, KING-STREET, ST JAMES'S,
Dec. 13th, 1784.

My dear General,

NO TWITHSTANDING our very unlucky diversity of sentiment upon one question of very inferior moment, I cannot entertain a moment's doubt but the intelligence I have to communicate will be most agreeable to you.

Before I left England, which, for reasons you probably may have heard, I had intended doing for some months, I thought it due to the common cause to wait upon Mr Pitt. I saw him on Monday and Wednesday last: On both those days I had much confidential conversation with him, respecting his ideas of Parliamentary Reformation, and the most adviseable means of effecting it. But, confidential as it was, I think myself authorized to declare to you, that he will most certainly bring his Propositions on early in the next Session; that he will support them to the utmost of his strength, and put forth his whole power and credit, *as a Man and as a Minister, honestly and boldly*, to carry such a meliorated system of Representation as may place the Constitution on a footing of permanent security. I am happy to add, that the prospect of success

is

is improved much beyond our most sanguine expectations.

If, in consequence of this encouraging intelligence, Gentlemen should think of meeting at York this winter, in order to give their support to a measure so beneficial to the country, I should be sorry to be absent. Here, therefore, I mean to stay till the question be ascertained, whether a County Meeting will be held this winter in Yorkshire. Before this conversation with Mr Pitt, I had uniformly and strenuously declared my opinion to all our friends with whom I had an opportunity to converse, that after his declaration in the House of his intention to agitate the subject this winter, we are bound by every tie of public duty and regard to private character, and that consistency we all wish to maintain, to endeavour to call the County together to support the measure; and however irksome and inconvenient it may be to me personally to attend, no supposable degree of fatigue or inconvenience shall deter me from once more joining those friends, with whom I am proud to have acted so long, in behalf of the common cause. I beg my best compliments to your Ladies;

And am, with great respect,

Dear General,
Your most sincere and faithful
humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper III.

Letter from the Rev. C. Wyvill to Sir THOMAS DUNDAS (now Lord DUNDAS).

NEROT'S HOTEL, KING-STREET, St JAMES'S,
Dec. 20th, 1784.

Dear Sir,

AFTER having performed, in some tolerable degree, what my duty to the Yorkshire Committee required, I now take the earliest opportunity to communicate to you the result of my late interview with Mr Pitt.

After much conversation on the subject of Parliamentary Reformation, he authorized me to assert, that he means to bring that subject before the House of Commons as soon as possible in the next Sessions; that he will support his intended propositions to the utmost of his strength, and exert his whole power and credit *as a Man and as a Minister, honestly and boldly*, to carry such a meliorated system of Representation, as may place the Constitution on a footing of permanent security.

If the true British spirit of liberty should be roused in Yorkshire, as I trust it will, by a declaration like this, and a County Meeting should be called in order to support so necessary a measure, I trust we shall have the support of Sir Thomas Dundas; whom I have long considered as one of the most zealous and truly disinterested friends to the proposed Reform, and by whose kind

kind assistance, principally, that unanimity which alone can render such a Meeting effectual may be preserved.

I am, dear Sir, with great respect,
Your most faithful, humble servant,
C. WYVILL.

FINIS.